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President: Mr. Holkeri ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 50

Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Report of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa (A/55/45)

Note by the Secretary-General (A/55/431)

Mr. Aboulgheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Many initiatives and thoughts for supporting development in Africa have been put forward over the years. However, the results have fallen short of realizing the objectives and aspirations that accompanied each and every one of these initiatives. Despite the fact that the development of any society is the responsibility first and foremost of that society and its Government, and despite sincere efforts to promote and develop African societies — particularly the least developed in the continent — the objectives will not be achieved as long as the international environment is not supportive.

In many cases this works against the interests of developing countries in general, and the least developed countries of Africa in particular. The questions of indebtedness, poverty and the shortfall of official development assistance (ODA), as well as disease — in particular, malaria and AIDS — all represent abnormal obstacles that prevent the attainment of the legitimate aspirations of the peoples of the continent to development and progress.

Despite the fact that the challenges of development and people's failure to realize their aspirations are considered one of the most salient causes of conflict and wars in Africa, we should not ignore the historical origins of these crises and the negative role played by many of the past imperial forces in sowing the seeds of conflict among the newly independent States just before their independence, whether because of the way they delineated the borders of these States or by fomenting tribal and ethnic strife among and between the States of the continent.

I recall these facts so that we do not find ourselves supporting the repeated claims that the African people bear the original responsibility for their wars and conflicts, that what is usually called the tribal nature of these people is to blame or, simplistically, that the crisis of development and the causes of conflict in Africa stem from the tribal circumstances of the African people or the absence of so-called good governance in some African States. If there is an element of truth in these claims, we must also consider the whole picture so that our judgement and apportionment of responsibility can be more accurate.

In facing the challenges of development in Africa, the continent sorely needs the United Nations to undertake a clear, effective and definite role for the settlement of conflicts on the continent. Not only does Africa expect the United Nations to move to contain

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the conflicts that rage on the continent, but it also expects the international community to move quickly, before the exacerbation and expansion of these conflicts.

The Secretary-General has, on more than one occasion, shown that the real problem does not stem from the absence of early warning mechanisms that alert us to the possibility of a crisis on the continent. It lies, rather, in the need for the United Nations to follow these warnings by undertaking speedy and effective measures, which have been lacking. We hope in this respect that the United Nations will take seriously the events that have recently intensified on the borders between Guinea and Sierra Leone and Liberia and address them decisively and quickly, since they presage a new regional conflict in the continent whose repercussions we cannot anticipate if the international community should fail to stem the crisis early.

More than two and a half years ago, in April 1998, the Secretary-General issued a report on the causes of conflict in Africa (A/52/871). There is no doubt that the African continent has since witnessed many of the developments referred to in the report regarding peace and security in the continent, peacekeeping, peacemaking, post-conflict peace-building and creating basic infrastructure to prevent the resumption of conflicts in Africa in the future.

During the same period, we have clearly witnessed greater determination by Africa — at the continental level, represented by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and at the subregional level — in settling its own disputes and in initiatives undertaken to end the wars raging in some countries. This African determination has been evident on more than one occasion, including the role played by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Sierra Leone, President Chiluba's efforts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, President Mandela's efforts in Burundi, the role played by President Bouteflika in ending the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea and President Omar Guelleh's great efforts culminating in the establishment of the first national Government in Somalia since 1991.

Egypt has always supported and participated in African efforts to find African solutions to the continent's problems. Egypt also reiterates that this expanded African role should in no way relieve the United Nations and the Security Council of their basic responsibilities towards the continent. It should not contribute to marginalizing the role of the international Organization and one of its main organs by supporting and enhancing regional efforts only so that the role of the international community becomes secondary and complementary.

Accordingly, while we welcome the increased importance the continent has recently been given within various circles and organs of the United Nations, we still believe there is a large gap between what the international community determines and commits to undertake to prevent and resolve conflicts on the continent and the actual steps taken to fulfil its collective responsibility in maintaining international peace and security in Africa and in overcoming the root causes of the conflicts that have severely damaged the continent's political, economic and social infrastructure.

The report of the Open-ended Working Group (A/55/45) before us clearly emphasizes that the genuine will of the international community in responding to African conflicts is absent. We are hopeful that the United Nations response to the conflict that began last May in Sierra Leone will be the rule and not the exception in the international community's treatment of African conflicts, which have become very complicated due to their political, security, ethnic and social dimensions. In this regard, we look forward to the Security Council's commitment, in accordance with the Millennium Declaration adopted by the General Assembly on 8 September 2000, to rededicate itself to attaching equal importance to the maintenance of international peace and security in all regions of the world, while attaching special importance to Africa and its unique needs and requirements.

We are also encouraged by the Secretary-General's statement, at the thirty-sixth session of the OAU summit at Lomé last July, that the United Nations is ready to assist Africa at all times and with all means available. We hope that the Secretary-General will continue to offer his good offices so that the United Nations will remain focused on African issues and problems and so that it will follow up the implementation of the Secretary-General's valuable recommendations on the causes of conflict in Africa.

Certainly there are many other areas in which we expect the international community to show interest in support of African endeavours to achieve peace,

stability and democracy on the continent. Unlike the role we require the United Nations to undertake under the Charter in the maintenance of international peace and security, the efforts of the international community, we hope, will be concentrated on supporting and reactivating the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution and will contribute generously to the trust fund established by the United Nations for that purpose.

We also call on the United Nations to support efforts within the continent to implement the plan of action adopted at the recent Lomé summit, as proposed at the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa, and to continue its activities aimed at supporting other structures and mechanisms in various fields in the continent agreed to by the African States.

The Working Group on the causes of conflict in Africa plays a central role in following up the implementation of the Secretary-General's recommendations, in determining the obstacles to their full implementation and in presenting specific proposals to reach the desired objectives. Undoubtedly, the report prepared by the Working Group is a worthy achievement that is useful for maintaining the momentum to enhance and coordinate all activities and initiatives undertaken by the United Nations and its relevant agencies for the establishment of peace, development and stability in Africa.

In this regard, I wish to express the Egyptian delegation's appreciation for the efforts of the co-Vice-Chairmen of the Group, the Ambassadors of Singapore and Spain, in guiding the Working Group during the last session of the General Assembly. We hope that the mandate of the Working Group will be extended to the next session of the General Assembly so that it will continue to play the important role entrusted to it under General Assembly resolution 54/234.

We, the Ambassadors of Africa are confident that the sincere efforts of the President of the General Assembly and the personal interest he has shown during our discussions with him will ensure the best possible participation and support for the Working Group from the entire membership of the Assembly. We assure the President of our complete readiness to cooperate with him and with the Bureau of the Working Group dealing with this issue so that we may achieve the laudable objectives which we all desire.

The President: I would like to thank the representative of Egypt for his cooperation in helping us begin the debate on time. I would also like to thank the representative of Singapore for his readiness to help our debate to proceed smoothly.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): I have to begin on a sombre note. First, we would like to thank all our friends and colleagues who have conveyed their sympathies and condolences to us on the tragic crash of the Singapore Airlines aircraft in Taipei yesterday. Secondly, as nationals of several countries lost their lives in the accident, we would also like to convey our sincere condolences to all the families who lost loved ones in the crash.

I would now like to begin my formal remarks on the agenda item, Mr. President, by thanking your predecessor, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, for inviting me to serve as a Vice-Chairman of the open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa. I was equally privileged to have served alongside my fellow Vice-Chairman, Ambassador Inocencio Arias, the Permanent Representative of Spain. Ambassador Arias brought to our common task wisdom, humour and strong diplomatic skills, which helped to guide our Working Group to a successful conclusion.

The mandate of our Working Group was to monitor the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report of April 1998, as well as the proposals made by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session in 1999. We began our work with modest expectations. The record of open-ended working groups within our house is, unfortunately, a mixed one. New Zealand's *United Nations Handbook* lists four open-ended working groups. Two have suspended their work. One, the Working Group on Security Council reform, is still continuing its work. The Working Group on Africa is therefore the fourth to have been established. Given the track record of our peers in the area of working groups, we were afraid that we would achieve little. In the end, we were relieved that we made some progress.

All in all, we had three meetings: in March, May and July this year. At the first session, in March, the Working Group decided that it required more information on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's

report. Hence, we invited the relevant organizations of the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions to address the Group. At the second session, we received comprehensive briefings from the Director for Regional and African Affairs of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and from Mr. Nitin Desai, the Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and from representatives from 15 different agencies of the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions.

Both Ambassador Arias and I encouraged interactive discussion at the second session. As a result, we learned a considerable amount of useful information. To facilitate a substantive discussion among members, all participants were also provided with detailed matrices prepared by the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries (OSCAL). The matrices, which are contained in the conference paper issued as document (A/AC.258/CRP.3), systematically charted the status of the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report. The matrices also laid out a rough roadmap of further steps to be taken by the United Nations system, as well as by Member States.

Our Working Group received a concrete request to set up a one-stop web site containing background information on the work of the Group, its working documents and the statements and reports made to the Group. Fortunately, the web site was launched and operated by OSCAL towards the end of June. The Web site, whose address, incidentally, is given in the report before the Assembly, served as a resource tool to facilitate the work of the Group. It is also a permanent Web resource for future use by resumed sessions of the Group. I think OSCAL should be commended here for the effort it put into designing and maintaining the Web site, as that Web site provides a vivid and live record of the work of the Group.

Our final session was spent negotiating the Working Group's final report. We were pleased to reach a consensus after the usual last-minute negotiations. Both Ambassador Arias and I commend the report to the Assembly for its adoption.

The good news on this issue is that there is now near universal recognition that Africa has special needs. The Millennium Summit Declaration, for example, had a separate section calling on the international community to meet the special needs of Africa. There is also widespread acknowledgement that the Secretary-General's report on Africa and the subsequent initiatives, including the work of our Working Group, have moved the process forward. However, the bad news is that there seems to be little tangible progress on the ground. Africa as a whole holds 13 per cent of the world's population, but is responsible for only 2 per cent of its economic output. Africa is also the only region of the world that is likely to almost double its population in the next 25 years. By then Africa will have 17 per cent of the world's population.

Today, at least 45 per cent of Africans live in poverty, barely surviving on less than $1 a day. Only 15 per cent of Africans today live in an environment considered minimally adequate for sustainable growth and development. Two hundred million Africans have no access to health facilities, while 2 million African children die before the age of five. It is estimated that African countries need annual economic growth rates of 7 per cent or more to eliminate poverty in 15 years, which is the goal set in the Secretary-General's report to the Millennium Assembly. However, African countries are only growing at an annual average rate of 3 per cent. Clearly, these are depressing statistics. A lot more needs to be done to reverse these trends. The Working Group therefore still has many tasks ahead. Both Ambassador Arias and I would like to encourage greater participation from all Member States, African and non-African alike, in the work of the Group, as some of our sessions were, unfortunately, sparsely attended.

There are a lot of significant new initiatives on Africa; for example, the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act and the recent Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Free Trade Area. Some effort should be made to coordinate all these initiatives and to ensure that they all work together to help Africa. The key test of the success of this Working Group, as well as of this and other initiatives, is that one must show substantive results on the ground. Enough papers have been written on Africa's needs. The time has now come to seek concrete results.

Success will ultimately be possible only if the global community becomes a stakeholder in Africa's progress. In a shrinking globe, as we move towards becoming a true global village, we cannot afford to

leave behind any section of our village community. Many studies have indeed been written about the dangers of leaving behind sections of our community. A recent book by Mr. Thomas Homer-Dixon entitled *The Ingenuity Gap: How Will We Solve the Problems of the Future* makes the following observations:

> "If a society develops a serious ingenuity gap — that is, if it loses the race between requirement and supply — prosperity falls in the regions already affected by scarcity, and people usually migrate out of those regions in large numbers. Social dissatisfaction rises, especially among marginal groups in ecologically fragile rural areas and urban squatter settlements. These changes undermine the government's legitimacy and raise the likelihood of widespread and chronic civil violence. Violence further erodes the society's capacity to supply ingenuity, especially by causing human and financial capital to flee".

We therefore urge all members of our global community to participate more actively in the work of the Working Group on Africa; let it not suffer the fate of similar working groups.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): I am pleased to take the floor on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus and Malta, as well as the European Free Trade Association country member of the European Economic Area, Liechtenstein, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union welcomes the opportunity to examine today the report of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa. The Working Group, which met on three occasions, each lasting a week, in March, May and July 2000, made a number of recommendations in various areas, all of which are fundamental for the future of the African continent: poverty eradication; HIV/AIDS; environment; debt; development financing; conflict prevention, peace and conflict management; refugees; and better coordination of international aid.

Before going into details concerning the significant lessons we may draw from the Working Group's proceedings and from the detailed recommendations made in its report, I should like to reiterate the European Union's commitment to the establishment of an integrated United Nations approach towards Africa. Such an integrated approach must effectively take into account the political, social and economic dimensions of conflict prevention and conflict resolution. Very clearly, that is one of the essential recommendations of the Secretary-General's report (A/52/871) published in April 1998. This is an issue which is as topical as ever, and which once again has been highlighted in the report (A/55/305) of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations chaired by Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi: development without peace is no more possible than peace without development. The European Union thus intends to continue tirelessly to urge that Africa's specific needs regarding peace and development should be taken into greater account in all international forums, particularly those of the United Nations.

The European Union is encouraged by the positive and constructive atmosphere that always prevailed in the meetings of the Working Group. Although the pitfall of duplicating the debate in other forums was not always avoided, the hearing given by the Working Group to representatives of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and to the Secretary-General's representatives on the ground undeniably helped enrich our collective thinking. The quality of the Working Group's endeavour is also reflected in the content of what is a balanced and reasonably determined report. In large part, this is thanks to the personal involvement of the Chairman, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, and also to the energetic and determined action of the two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassadors Kishore Mahbubani of Singapore and Inocencio Arias of Spain, from whom the Assembly has just heard. The European Union would like to salute the decisive contribution of those individuals to the success of this exercise, which was not a foregone conclusion.

On the Working Group's working methods, I must also add that the European Union was particularly impressed by the intelligent and intensive use of the Internet. The creation of a web site devoted to the Working Group's proceedings enabled delegations to keep constantly abreast of the progress of discussions and of the contributions made by all participants; it

also made the outside world better acquainted with the Working Group's approach.

For the European Union, it is thus absolutely essential that the General Assembly provide concrete operational follow-up to the Working Group's suggestions and that the investment made, which is considerable, not be overlooked or underutilized.

On the actual content of the Working Group's report, the European Union still regrets, as we said last July, that sufficiently strong emphasis has not yet been placed on the decisive issue of conflict prevention. The grave crises that have occurred in Africa since the publication of the Secretary-General's report in April 1998 — the crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict, the increased risk of the Sierra Leone conflict spilling over into neighbouring countries — show that we can never invest enough in prevention. The United Nations must also provide more and better support for regional efforts towards peace and security, including, where necessary, by making available financial or human resources. For its part, the European Union has played an active role in the mediation exercise conducted by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict, and intends to continue that effort. The European Union notes with great interest the latest recommendations of the Security Council mission to Sierra Leone with respect to increasing the assistance to be provided to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) regarding regional security.

Still on the analysis of the causes of conflicts and on doing a better job of averting them, the European Union fully supports the initiatives taken by the Security Council to gain a better understanding of the economic origins and commercial aspects of certain African crises and denouncing the links between trafficking in raw materials and in arms. The establishment of the follow-up mechanism for applying sanctions against UNITA, the setting up of a panel to investigate the illegal exploitation of the resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the establishment of a panel to inquire into illegal trafficking in diamonds and arms in Sierra Leone are all examples of this new approach. The European Union fully supports the better coordination of all these initiatives within an expert structure: by definition, trafficking knows no borders, and the criminal interests are often the same from one crisis to another.

The European Union welcomes the fact that the Economic and Social Council has chosen Africa as a theme for high-level debate at its next substantive session, to be held in July 2001. It is imperative that economic and social thinking on Africa be coordinated and consistent within the United Nations system. Here, the European Union is pleased with the content of the millennium report prepared by the Secretary-General (A/54/2000) and by the Millennium Declaration. The European Union remains firmly committed to implementing the recommendations of that Declaration.

Turning to the observations of the Working Group on the issue of debt, I should like to reiterate that the European Union considers the reinforced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt (HIPC) Initiative to be an essential element in combating poverty and achieving the objectives of sustainable development. To date, the European Union has provided 68 per cent of the total contributions paid into the trust fund for financing the HIPC Initiative. We call upon eligible countries to carry out their international political commitments and to take the political and economic measures necessary to engage in this process and to ensure that the funds generated by this initiative are directed towards the social sector, such as education and health, and promote the rule of law, good governance, the participation of civil society and human development.

I would not like to end my statement without recalling the determined commitment of the European Union to continue its ongoing dialogue with African countries on all of these issues. The success of the Africa-Europe Summit, held in Cairo in April 2000 under the auspices of the European Union and the Organization of African Unity, requires us to do so. We shall resolutely continue on that path.

Ms. King (United States of America): I should like to congratulate the Governments of Singapore and Spain on their assumption of the leadership of this critical task.

The report before this Assembly is a broad investigation of the roots of conflict and a host of other ills that continue to bedevil the African continent. I subscribe to its observations and recommendations, but I want to use this important forum to offer some

observations based on our work in the United Nations over the past 15 months.

This discussion has raised some important questions about the causes of conflict today. Of course, these questions and answers are not unique to Africa — conflict has existed on every continent — but they do seem particularly acute in Africa. To my mind, there are four critical questions. First, does poverty cause conflict in Africa? While the relationship between poverty and conflict cannot be denied, it is much more complex than one of simple cause and effect. Some of Africa's most tragic countries are some of the world's richest in natural resources — the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone and Angola, for example. Some of the poorest countries are at peace. In economic terms, Mali is among the poorest countries within the United Nations. However, from the grass-roots level to the presidential palace, Malians are working together to build a better life for themselves and their children. They are building democracy. Though they face many challenges, armed conflict is not one of them.

Secondly, do ethnic divisions cause conflict in Africa? Too many of the world's conflicts, whether in Central Africa, the Balkans or East Timor, have been attributed to ancient ethnic hatreds. This could not be more wrong. Ethnic groups do not have genetic codes for violence and conflict. Indeed, the most recent scientific breakthroughs on the human genome highlight an important fact: in genetic terms, all human beings, regardless of race or ethnicity, are more than 99.9 per cent the same. This means that modern science has confirmed what many of us first learned through our faiths: the most important fact of life on earth is our common humanity.

So why is it that some choose to fight over such minor differences? I contend that it is because of cynical leaders — leaders who seek any means possible to exploit others for personal gain; leaders who choose not to celebrate and draw strength from the minor differences within humanity, but to exacerbate and magnify these minor differences for their own ambitions.

It has been just over a year since the world mourned the loss of Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, a leader who presided over a country that is a glorious mosaic of cultures and languages and which today enjoys a strong and vibrant national identity. On the other side of the equation, Somalia might be the most ethnically homogeneous country in Africa, yet it was plunged into a chaos from which it is only now beginning to emerge.

Hutu and Tutsi violence in Rwanda and Burundi does not reflect a permanent animus. Rather, it represents a divide-and-conquer strategy by which colonial and post-colonial politicians sought to perpetuate their rule. Such people are not true nationalists; they are opportunists who seek to stoke nationalist and ethnic fires for their own personal gain. As we have seen all over the world, politicians and opportunists who sow the seeds of ethnic chauvinism for self-advancement can plunge entire regions into chaos. They — not the forces they unleash — are responsible for the violence that ensues.

Thirdly, do religious differences cause conflict in Africa? We see the same twisted dynamic at work as leaders try to exploit religious differences for personal gain. Until very recently, there had never been any tensions between Christians and Muslims in Côte d'Ivoire. Sectarian violence was unheard of in one of Africa's strongest economies and most open and welcoming societies. In most parts of East and West Africa, Christians and Muslims coexist with no difficulties. However, in many countries — not just in Africa — unscrupulous leaders often try to create sectarian violence as a means to political influence. That is an indictment of those individuals, not of the millions of faithful who can live in harmony.

I took note when the Ivorian Minister of the Interior visited the mass grave of victims of recent unrest and said that the massacre was alien to the culture of his great country and a source of shame for all Ivorians. That sentiment was almost as important as his pledge of a full and immediate investigation, for it showed that such acts are contrary to the political and civic culture of Côte d'Ivoire, and must remain that way.

Fourthly, do colonial boundaries cause conflict in Africa? Apart from those from island Member States, all of us live in places with arbitrary boundaries, yet this does not make conflict inevitable. Zambia borders two countries racked by conflict — Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo — and three more that have had internal conflicts in the past 25 years: Namibia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Zambia's people share common languages and identities with all of their neighbours, and the country's boundaries

reflect the intersection of Belgian, British, German and Portuguese colonialism. However, Zambia is at peace with itself and its neighbours.

Again, I refuse to believe that conflict is inevitable. In accordance with United States experience in the Balkans and more recently in Africa, we reject the thesis that so-called ancient hatreds determine the fate of nations. We also reject the concept of a "failed" State. States and peoples do not fail; leaders fail.

Perhaps the true cause of conflict in Africa is unaccountable governance. If there is war when people want peace, the inescapable conclusion is that the Governments making war are not listening to their people.

Take any conflict — internal or external — in Africa today. Whether we discuss Angola, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Rwanda, Burundi, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea or Somalia, the international community and, more importantly, the people in these countries, need to ask the following questions. Where are the parliaments demanding to know why the executive branches have committed the resources of the State to a conflict? Where are the courts demanding to investigate charges of human rights abuses and outright theft? Where are the newspapers and radio stations demanding to know who made the decision to go to war? Where is civil society to tell armed movements to lay down their weapons and enter the political life of their countries? Where are the opposition political parties demanding votes of confidence in Governments that make war? Where are the trade unions, churches and civic organizations demanding to know why their men are sent to fight and die in wars that are not of their making? Where are the women's organizations demanding to know why their Governments and movements make war when their children cannot afford to go to school? Where are the Ministries of Finance and the central banks demanding an accounting of money spent and stolen by officials of the State itself? Where are the opportunities for voters to change Governments that make war or repudiate movements that will not make peace?

The Security Council is charged with the maintenance of international peace and security. However, nowhere in the Charter of the United Nations does it say that we are collectively responsible for ensuring good government in other peoples' countries. What are we to do, however, if our obligation to maintain peace and security conflicts with our desire to maintain the national sovereignty of our members? We, as the United Nations, and we, as the Security Council, can address the effects of conflicts and even alleviate many of the symptoms of conflict. However, only through the advancement of the universal principle of accountable governance, which we believe comes with democracy, can we truly begin to live up to the challenges embodied in the United Nations Charter.

The United Nations and the United States share a wonderful common bond: our founding documents begin with the phrase "We the people." Although the United Nations Charter uses the word "peoples," I believe that in either case a reading of our instructions really does not need to go any further than the first three words.

There has been much talk over the last year about which organ of the United Nations is supreme. At the end of the day, we believe that in our people lies the true authority of this Organization, or of any Government. I do not mean the people as an abstract concept; I mean the people as the individuals who, for example, will decide on 7 November if some of us in this room have to find a new line of work. When every President, every Minister and every Permanent Representative in Africa knows that his or her job depends on the approval of their people, I predict that the job of maintaining international peace and security in that part of the world will get easier.

Mr. Shen Guofang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation thanks the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa for its report, which has offered a systematic analysis of the implementation of the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report; it also offers an analysis of the agreed conclusions on African development adopted at the Economic and Social Council substantive session of 1999, and the obstacles facing such implementation. In addition, it puts forward recommendations for further action in this regard. We appreciate the outstanding jobs done by Mr. Mahbubani, Ambassador of Singapore, and Mr. Arias, Ambassador of Spain, in their capacity as the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group.

In the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the heads of State or Government expressed their resolve to

> "support the consolidation of democracy in Africa and assist Africans in their struggle for lasting peace, poverty eradication and sustainable development, thereby bringing Africa into the mainstream of the world economy".

This marks the latest commitment made by the international community for Africa and is one of vital importance.

Seventy per cent of the conflicts discussed in the Security Council are in Africa; therefore, African conflicts should arouse our concern. The Brahimi report contains many views and recommendations regarding peacekeeping operations in Africa. We hope that the work of the Working Group will be matched with the recommendations of the Brahimi report and will play a great role in peace-making, peacekeeping and peace-building following conflicts in Africa. We hope that the Security Council will attach importance to this.

Thanks to the efforts of African countries and the support of the international community, the African economy has looked up in recent years. However, according to statistics, the general situation in Africa is still worrisome, and the gap between its development level and that of the world as a whole continues to widen. The small and vulnerable economies in Africa, and the least developed countries in particular, have found themselves in an even less favourable situation. Currently, 52 per cent of the African population still live on less than one dollar a day. The absolute majority of the 48 least developed countries of the world, the absolute majority of the world's refugees, and 90 per cent of the world's children who have become orphans because their parents have died of HIV/AIDS, are in Africa.

Given the opportunities and potential brought about by globalization, it is a shame to see that the vast number of African countries have been excluded from globalization, that they have been marginalized, or even forced to bear the negative impact of the process; this is something that no one can accept with peace of mind.

On the one hand, African countries should bear the responsibility for their own prosperity, stability and development. On the other hand, it is also a common task of the international community. The peace- and development-related problems in Africa have been inherited from the past; they are long-standing and deep-rooted. They have complex social, economic and other kinds of causes and need to be addressed by African countries and the international community with a comprehensive and integrated approach. The overriding priority at present is to see to it that the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), the recommendations of the Secretary-General on the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, as well as the relevant commitments in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, will be translated into more effective actions.

According to the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group, African countries and the international community have already taken many steps to implement the Secretary-General's recommendations, some of which have yielded positive results. However, just as the report has pointed out, there are still many obstacles in the way of the implementation process. The recommendations put forward in the report for overcoming those obstacles and for taking further actions have already been largely accepted by African countries. It is our hope that when further actions are pursued, country-specific programmes will be developed on the basis of the specific conditions of the countries concerned. The responsibilities of the country concerned and those of the international community should also be specified for better fulfilment.

I wish to highlight the following points pertaining to international actions in this regard. First, the international community should pay attention to the special needs of Africa and assist African countries to integrate into the world economy and achieve economic growth and sustainable development. In this era of great changes, the institutional capacities of African countries are still too weak for them to compete successfully on the global level. For this reason, in discussions concerning international economic, financial and trade policies, it is extremely important to ensure that we have the participation of the African countries and that their interests be well protected. At the same time, it is necessary to strengthen the development of human resources and capacity-building in other fields.

Secondly, there should be a stronger flow of funds to Africa. At the present stage, Africa still has a lot of practical difficulties in absorbing private investments and official development assistance (ODA) continues to play a dominant role there. Therefore, there is an enormous need for ODA to be increased as soon as possible to the level of 0.7 per cent of the gross national product (GNP) of developed countries, as promised. At the same time, all Governments and international organizations should look for feasible methods to encourage foreign direct investment in Africa. We also hope to see tangible results in this regard at the high-level international intergovernmental event on financing for development to be held next year.

Thirdly, steps should be taken to increase market access for African countries. In particular, developed countries should eliminate tariff and non-tariff barriers against superior products from Africa, so as to help African countries enhance development through trade.

Fourthly, the external debts of African countries should be further reduced and cancelled. At present, relevant proposals on debt relief have failed to achieve satisfactory results and have given rise to worries on the part of many African countries. We appeal to relevant international financial institutions and major creditor countries to listen to the voice of African countries and take bigger steps forward in this regard.

Fifthly, real actions should be taken to promote transfers of technology, including efforts to create information technology opportunities for African countries. In particular, we should give priority to helping African countries build their infrastructures and develop human resources in order to support their use of information technology so as to achieve rapid growth.

Sixthly, the unchecked spread of infectious diseases like HIV/AIDS and malaria, which are a great drain on human and economic resources, has become a serious economic and social problem in African countries, as well as a big challenge to their security. We welcome the efforts made by African countries and the international community to fight against these diseases. We also support the proposal to convene a special session of the General Assembly on the issue of HIV/AIDS, and we hope the special session will mobilize entire societies and provide effective policies and measures, with a view to winning the war against HIV/AIDS.

Finally, we endorse the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Working Group's report that the great number of proposals on the issue of Africa must be sorted out and narrowed down to effective and well-coordinated ones, so as to make a greater use of precious resources, improve efficiency and create maximum favourable conditions for African development. We are of the view that the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group should be extended, in order to continue to promote the implementation of the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report.

The China-Africa Cooperation Forum, Ministerial Conference, Beijing 2000 was successfully convened 10 to 12 October. Approximately 80 ministers from 45 African countries and representatives of about 20 regional organizations attended this event. The twin themes of the conference were, first, how to push ahead with the establishment of a fair and just new international political and economic order in the twenty-first century so as to safeguard the common interests of developing countries, and, secondly, how to promote China-Africa cooperation under new circumstances, in substantive fields such as trade and the economy. Participants had an extensive exchange of views in this regard. The Conference adopted the Beijing Declaration of the China-Africa Cooperation Forum and the programme for China-Africa cooperation in economic and social development. The former reflected the common ground between China and Africa on major international issues, while the latter provided highly detailed and feasible programmes for China-Africa cooperation in all fields.

At the forum, China made four commitments concerning its continued support for the economic and social development of African countries. First, China undertook to provide, within its capacity and within the framework of South-South cooperation, all forms of assistance and aid to African countries, in accordance with the specific economic conditions of those countries. China's assistance and aid to Africa do not have any political conditions attached to them and are not aimed at seeking any political privileges. Also, so as to better satisfy the needs of African countries, China's assistance and aid will grow and be more effectively delivered as China's economy and overall national strength grow. Secondly, the Chinese side is undertaking to reduce or cancel debts amounting to 10

billion yuan renminbi owed by the heavily indebted poor countries and least-developed countries in Africa in the coming two years. Thirdly, the Chinese side will set aside special funds to support and encourage investment by Chinese enterprises in African countries. At the same time, China will help expand exports from African countries to China based on the principle of giving preference to African products, other things being equal. Fourthly, China will establish an African human-resources-development fund and expand China-Africa cooperation in a wider range of fields, especially in the fields of human-resources development, science and technology, and education. The fund will gradually grow in scale as a means to help African countries train more professional staff of all kinds.

The China-Africa Cooperation Forum was a collective dialogue between the two sides conducted at the turn of the century, as well as a successful and important exploration of their common development. It also marks China's new contribution to the promotion of South-South cooperation. We hope that the Forum will make greater contributions to peace and development on the African continent.

Mr. Kpotsra (Togo) (*spoke in French*): This is the third straight time since the publication in April 1998 of the important report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa that the General Assembly has considered this item. This year the Assembly will be discussing the item in the light of the report drafted by the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group, established pursuant to resolution 54/234. But this consideration will take place with constant reference to the specifically African aspects of this question expressed in the Millennium Declaration adopted on 8 September 2000.

We will also be mindful of the fact that our consideration of the report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa by various bodies — in particular the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council — has already allowed us to analyse its political, economic and social recommendations and to define operational approaches to be followed in their implementation.

I wish to express my profound gratitude to Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, President of the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, and to the two Vice-Chairmen of the Ad Hoc Working Group, the Permanent Representatives of Spain and Singapore, for their excellent work.

Following its three sessions, the Ad Hoc Working Group concluded that the implementation of the recommendations of the report of the Secretary-General demonstrates that, despite some progress, obstacles remain to their effective implementation and that new guidelines are necessary to hasten it. The areas identified by the Ad Hoc Working Group as having enjoyed progress are numerous and various. Although real and tangible, this progress should not induce us to lose sight of the need to pursue efforts to find new, innovative solutions. The work that remains to be done is enormous.

I turn now to peacemaking. The Security Council has accorded special attention to improving sanctions regimes in Africa, to the plight of refugees and displaced persons in Africa and to the protection of children in armed conflict. It has shown its resolve to consider post-conflict peace-building, as demonstrated by its initiatives in Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and the Central African Republic. Recent public debates and the resolutions adopted in their wake are eloquent testimony to this new dynamism in its work.

What is revealing of the pre-eminent role that the Security Council intends to play in conflict prevention and resolution in Africa is the fact that the Council is seeking to acquire a better understanding of the conflicts besetting the continent. This approach is evident not only in field missions dispatched this year — particularly to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea/Ethiopia and Sierra Leone — but also in its direct dialogues with the protagonists to the conflicts. We might consider, for example, the public meetings and private consultations held in January 2000 with several heads of State of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in relation to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In this context of multiple conflicts, it becomes clear that any action to implement the Secretary-General's recommendations must necessarily fail in unstable areas and that, without peace and stability, there can be no activities to establish sustainable development in Africa. This is the point being made by the Ad Hoc Working Group when it stresses in

particular the need for the political will that must underpin any effort of Africans themselves and the international community. Accordingly, Africa is trying to fight the proliferation of and illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons that sustain conflicts and transborder crime.

We hope that the Pan African Conference of Ministers on this issue, to be held at Bamako from 30 November to 1 December, will provide African countries with an opportunity to prepare for the forthcoming United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be held next year.

We cannot discuss progress in the implementation of the recommendations which the Secretary-General makes in his report without stressing that Africa is trying, through such Organization of African Unity (OAU) mechanisms as the African Ministerial Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa, to create conditions conducive to sustainable development. Th Ad Hoc Working Group supports this process and calls on the Secretary-General to help implement it.

One point worth making is that Africa has, in many cases predating the Secretary-General's report, created instruments for conflict management, such as the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, the Conflict Management Centre and the Early Warning System. The subregional initiatives of African States should also be mentioned as part of this trend. However, these mechanisms must receive financial support if we genuinely wish to strengthen African peacekeeping capacities.

Despite the Security Council's renewed interest in Africa, our continent remains host to the most deadly conflicts and to the most refugees and displaced persons. With particular respect to refugees in Africa, the Ad Hoc Working Group stresses the fact that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other competent bodies have undertaken activities to strengthen their security and to safeguard the civilian, humanitarian nature of their camps and shelters. However, these actions, like so many other initiatives — and I am thinking in particular of the partnership between the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank and the UNHCR — have failed qualitatively to improve the plight of refugees in Africa. In many cases, refugees remain the sole responsibility of the host countries, which, given their own precarious economic situation, are unable to give them the required assistance. I cannot fail to emphasize once again how disturbing it is to become aware of the extreme imbalance between the way refugees are treated in Africa and the assistance they receive in other parts of the world.

In the light of all this, the thirty-sixth OAU Summit — which stressed the need for African States to continue to address the underlying causes of the problem of refugees in Africa — strongly urged the international community to provide the necessary resources and funds to undertake the comprehensive implementation plan adopted at the ad hoc meeting of governmental and non-governmental technical experts, held under the auspices of the OAU and UNHCR in Conakry, Guinea, from 27 to 29 March 2000, as well as the recommendations of the sixth OAU-International Committee of the Red Cross Seminar on International Humanitarian Law, held in Addis Ababa on 15 and 16 May.

Africa hopes that this appeal will be promptly heeded. We applaud the recent appointment of Mr. Ruud Lubbers to the post of High Commissioner for Refugees and call on him to make action for refugees in Africa one of his priorities during his term of office.

The question of relief for African debt has been identified by the Ad Hoc Working Group as one area in which the Secretary-General's recommendations have also begun to be implemented. As I stressed recently before the Second Committee when discussing the item on macroeconomic policy questions and the external debt crisis, we cannot fail to recognize that, in recent years, the international community has striven to undertake commendable initiatives to help implement appropriate solutions to problems of debt stock and debt servicing. We are pleased to refer to the decision taken in Cologne in June 1999 by the Group of 8 to enhance the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt (HIPC) Initiative, which was endorsed in September 1999 by the International Monetary and Financial Committee of the International Monetary Fund and the Development Committee of the World Bank. Pursuant to a choice made by the Group of 8 itself, nine heavily indebted countries are already benefiting from this decision.

However, these one-time solutions will not enable sub-Saharan African countries to devote the bulk of their resources on basic social services — far from it — because debt reimbursements divert valuable resources from projects, the implementation of which would help to eradicate poverty. That is why the thirty-sixth OAU Summit demanded that the HIPC Initiative be extended to all African countries as a step towards the simple cancellation of African debt.

It is encouraging that the Ad Hoc Working Group, which is in favour of cancelling the debt of the least developed countries (LDCs), suggested that the General Assembly give serious consideration to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development proposal to set up an independent body to evaluate the viability of African debt, with a commitment to cancel the debt of the highly indebted poor countries — debt that is considered unlikely to be repaid. We hope that these recommendations and all other initiatives will be considered in depth at the intergovernmental event on financing for development, to be held in 2001, in which Africa intends to take a very active part.

The Ad Hoc Working Group has identified a number of obstacles to the speedy implementation of the Secretary-General's recommendations in his report (A/52/871) on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. These obstacles have to do with, inter alia, the general public health situation. In this regard, we agree that if there is one area where there has been a dramatic deterioration in the situation since the publication of the report of the Secretary-General, it is the incidence of HIV/AIDS and its impact on Africa's future. This pandemic has become a real development problem and represents a real threat to the survival of the human race, particularly in Africa.

At this session the General Assembly intends to give serious thought to the question of HIV/AIDS. We welcome that, because there is no doubt that if there is one problem that requires urgent, concerted and energetic intervention by the international community, it is the struggle against this pandemic. The situation of AIDS orphans in Africa, who, according to some predictions, will number 40 million in 2010, shows the social impact of this pandemic, whose effects are made worse by the high cost of medicines.

Apart from HIV/AIDS, malaria is a source of great concern for Africa. Statistics indicate that there are 400 million people suffering from malaria in the world, 300 million of them in Africa, and that 2 million people die of this disease each year. Its impact goes far beyond the area of public health; it has now become an important socio-economic development question.

This tragic situation impelled the African heads of State and Government, at a special meeting in Abuja on 24 and 25 April 2000 to adopt the Declaration and Plan of Action on "Roll Back Malaria", on the basis of which the thirty-sixth summit of the Organization of African Unity deemed it timely to appeal to the United Nations to proclaim 2001-2010 the decade to reduce malaria. Africa hopes that the General Assembly will follow up on this request very soon.

The crucial health problems facing Africa highlight Africa's lack of financial resources. As we know, the best initiatives to promote economic and social development in Africa must be supported by the availability of adequate financial resources. However, we note with concern that official development assistance (ODA) has been declining since 1990. From $23 billion in 1992, it dropped to $18 billion in 1997, and this trend is continuing inexorably. At the same time, we note with regret that this decline also affects multilateral assistance, because development aid provided by United Nations funds and programmes and specialized agencies is also declining, thus jeopardizing the development of African States. It is encouraging, however, that some countries, such as Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland have reached or even gone beyond the goal of 0.7 per cent of GDP for ODA. It is essential that all donor countries resolve to raise their ODA levels to the goal of 0.7 per cent of GNP for the developing countries and 0.15 per cent for the LDCs.

In this regard, the holding of a meeting on development aid for Africa, for which the Working Group is strongly pushing, would be an opportunity for donor countries to exchange experience in this area. We know that the overall increase of private capital flows to developing countries has largely overshadowed Africa. Furthermore, whereas private loans have practically stopped for Africa, and the total amount of private, non-settled, short-term debt was in 1997 more than $6 billion higher than in the first years of that decade, domestic savings in most African countries continue to be marked by structural weakness.

This precarious situation, which characterizes the state of financial resources in African countries and condemns them to absolute poverty, prompted the General Assembly to state at the special session, Copenhagen + 5, that, despite the battle that has been waged since 1995 against poverty, the number of very poor people has constantly increased and that there persist serious doubts as to whether we will attain the goal of reducing poverty by half by 2015.

In the same context, we cannot be surprised if Africa has doubts about whether the objectives defined by the Dakar Framework for Action, "Education For All," adopted at the World Education Forum in April 2000, can be attained.

In the light of the points I have made, and given the urgent need to find ways to implement the recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict, we believe that in order to enable our continent to deal with its enormous problems the mandate of the Ad Hoc Group should be extended. It is also wise, we feel, to support the proposal that the new mandate of the Ad Hoc Group should include the establishment of sub-groups to deal with specific areas, as indicated in chapter IV of the report before us.

Special emphasis should be placed on the contribution of the Economic and Social Council. We welcome its initiative to plan, during its substantive 2001 session, a high-level segment on the role of the United Nations system in supporting the efforts of African countries in bringing about development. In addition, there should be close cooperation between the General Assembly and the Security Council on this subject.

In conclusion, I wish to stress that, aware of its basic responsibility for efforts relating to the promotion of development, Africa is determined to work to improve its political, economic and social situation. In this endeavour, we hope to continue to enjoy the attention and kind support of all those who wish to help Africa.

The President: As members will have seen, we have made some changes in the sequence of speakers at this meeting, due to the absence of some speakers at the beginning. We are now returning to the original list of speakers. I hope that all speakers will be in the Hall on time for future meetings, to avoid disturbances of the debate such as we have experienced today.

May I also remind members of our practice that all speakers not present in the Hall on time will be placed at the very end of the list of speakers. I intend to adhere to that practice.

Mr. Ka (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): Allow me at the outset to extend the condolences of my delegation to the fraternal and friendly country of Singapore following yesterday's Singapore Airlines aeroplane accident. I also wish to express condolences to the families of all of the victims.

Mr. Mungra (Suriname), Vice-President, took the Chair.

My delegation wishes first to express heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, President of the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, on having established and chaired the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group to consider the follow-up to the Secretary-General's report (A/52/871) on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

Congratulations and sincere gratitude go likewise to the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, Mr. Kishore Mahbubani and Mr. Inocencio Arias, Permanent Representatives of Singapore and Spain to the United Nations. They conducted the Group's work with competence, commitment and professionalism, in accordance with the mandate of the General Assembly.

My delegation took an active part in the Group's work, and we salute the spirit of consensus shared by all the participants as well as the culture of dialogue which prevailed throughout the three sessions which culminated in the report before us today, whose structure makes it easy to read and understand.

It is clear from the Group's conclusions that important progress was made in implementing the recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General: progress in the promotion of peace, the peacekeeping and in peace-building; progress in the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Africa; and progress in attaining social development goals, in providing access to markets and relative progress in debt relief efforts. But there has also been progress in the process of cooperation and regional integration as well as in the harmonization and coordination of multilateral and bilateral initiatives for the economic and social development of the continent.

We should definitely emphasize this progress, but it needs to be seen in the context of the constraints that still impede the free development of Africa. As is rightly stressed in the report of the Working Group, obstacles remain — in some cases, increasing obstacles — to the effective implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General: lack of real political will on the part of the international community; insufficient resources and capacities; governance problems in certain African countries; and the persistence of internal or inter-State armed conflicts. As a matter of urgency, we need to silence the weapons and to understand that there can be no sustainable development in Africa without peace. Hence it is important that Africa make sure that its peace concerns are tied to the relevant recommendations in the Brahimi report (A/55/305). Other obstacles are limited access to scientific and technological innovations and, finally, the weakness of the private sector in Africa.

These are real obstacles. Far from denying or underestimating them, my country believes that we need to consider them and take the right steps to overcome them. But while some are the responsibility of the Governments of the African countries, others are the responsibility of the international community, particularly of the champions of development in Africa.

There is no doubt that at the national level African countries should invest more in building and consolidating the rule of law, in good governance and in respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Similarly, regional and subregional preventive diplomacy and crisis resolution mechanisms must be truly operational. At the same time, they must demonstrate more political will to implement the commitments they have freely entered into for the promotion of regional integration. The signing, last July, in Lomé of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, was a step in the right direction, which the international community should support. Similarly, African Administrations have a basic responsibility to design and implement sustainable inclusive social development policies, strengthen gender equality, implement coherent economic policies and combat poverty, illiteracy and unemployment.

These objectives will not be attained in a context of armed conflict, with the bulk of our national resources being diverted to military purposes. Nor can we combat HIV/AIDS in Africa if Africa spends only $165 million a year on AIDS, whereas the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) estimates that $2 billion to $3 billion is needed to combat the disease.

The basic question is, therefore, financing for development, which is particularly crucial today, since official development assistance (ODA) continues to drop in quality and quantity. Because of Africa's limited access to private capital markets and because of the drop in ODA, which has not been supplemented by direct foreign investments, deficiencies which the report of the Working Group recognizes, it is important that the international community deal with these basic questions. Moreover, weak domestic savings, the heavy debt burden and high tariffs all continue to limit access to markets. Therefore, it is important that urgent, bold measures be taken reverse this negative trend, particularly in the current context of double-speed globalization, whose current patterns have led to a sense of insecurity by weakening the ability of Governments to control and manage their national policies.

As the Millennium Declaration states, globalization will benefit everyone equitably only if a major new sustained effort is made to build a common future based on our shared human condition. This effort should produce policies and measures at the world scale consonant with the needs of the developing countries.

The Secretary-General's report and the Working Group's report have helped to create momentum with regard to Africa, and this should be maintained. This is why my delegation calls for a methodical follow-up on the Working Group proposals by the General Assembly and all of the bodies of the United Nations system. This follow-up work should deal, inter alia, with the six thematic areas proposed by the Group: poverty eradication, debt relief, financing for development, the fight against HIV/AIDS, the prevention of conflict and peace-building, the plight of refugees and displaced persons and, finally, the question of the coordination and rationalization of the various initiatives for Africa.

In conclusion, I wish, on behalf of my country, to support the proposals to extend the Working Group's mandate and to develop reliable criteria to assess the impact of the measures taken and the results obtained in the implementation of the relevant recommendations

of the Secretary-General. In that same spirit, my delegation is pleased that the Millennium Declaration, adopted by our heads of State and Government, contains a whole section on Africa. My delegation would suggest that in the follow-up work we take into account the recommendations on Africa adopted at the Millennium Summit.

Mr. Mwakawago (United Republic of Tanzania): First, allow me to express our condolences and sympathy to the Government and the people of Singapore and the families of the deceased following the tragic Singapore Airlines accident yesterday morning in Taipei.

The issues of conflict resolution, sustained economic growth and sustainable development in Africa have been the focus of discussions in the General Assembly and its main bodies and other international organizations, such as the Economic and Social Council, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Health Organization (WHO), to name but a few.

In view of the gravity of the situation, in January this year the Security Council held a special session to address the state of Africa and how to resolve the crisis, and stressed the need for the international community to resolve the African crisis in the areas of peace, development and health on an urgent basis. The Millennium Summit recognized the seriousness of the African situation and urged that remedial action be taken by the international community. In this respect, we believe that the root causes of Africa's underdevelopment and conflicts are well known and understood. The challenge is the implementation of various agreed measures to address those problems. In this context, we welcome the report of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group, contained in document A/55/45, which is now before us.

The report of the Ad Hoc Working Group identifies a number of initiatives being undertaken in the areas of conflict resolution, sustainable development and poverty eradication. It observes that while some progress may be discerned in the implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General, there are a number of problems that need to be resolved.

The first step towards addressing the African problem is to forge a strong partnership between the international community and the countries affected by the crisis. In this regard, we therefore support the call for a sustained tripartite effort by the African countries, the United Nations system and the donor community. This partnership should be aimed at the enhancement of the efforts Africa is making in the economic, social and security fields.

In the area of conflicts, which are hampering efforts to achieve progress in economic and social development in some African countries, it is important to increase support for the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the corresponding subregional organizations. These mechanisms are playing a significant role in conflict prevention and resolution in Africa. Recently, Africa also established the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa. What is needed are resources to enable these mechanisms to prepare better for the task of conflict prevention and resolution. Notwithstanding these efforts, we fully endorse the caution expressed in the Ad Hoc Working Group's report regarding the fact that the efforts undertaken by African Governments in this field should in no way relieve the Security Council of its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Tanzania supports the efforts aimed at conflict resolution in the Great Lakes region, particularly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi. We call upon the international community to support the Lusaka Agreement on the Democratic Republic of the Congo since it remains the only firm framework for a comprehensive peace in that country. In this regard, we urge that the peacekeeping force mandated by the Security Council be fully deployed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as soon as possible.

The international community and the regional leaders have been involved in the search for peace in Burundi through the Arusha peace process. Some progress has been made in this process following the signing of the Burundi peace accord in August this year. The peace accord, which was facilitated by President Nelson Mandela, provides a good basis for resolving the Burundi conflict. We call upon all parties to respect and implement the agreement so as to bring peace to that country.

In Angola, it is with apprehension that we bear witness to the continuing hostilities and grave humanitarian situation brought about by Jonas Savimbi and his organization, UNITA. We appeal to the Security Council and the international community to assist the Angolan Government in its efforts to restore peace and address the worsening humanitarian situation in that country.

With regard to Somalia, we welcome the agreement reached in Djibouti recently on the formation of the Government of that country. In this regard, we congratulate the Government of Djibouti for its constructive role in that process. The new Somalia will need the support and assistance of all peace-loving people, and of the international community at large.

There is a direct linkage between conflicts and the incidence of refugees and internally displaced persons. It is estimated that Africa has over 7 million people who are refugees and displaced persons. Tanzania is hosting more than 800,000 refugees, most of whom are products of the crisis in the Great Lakes region. In our previous interventions we have stressed the need for the international community to increase its support for refugees and for nations hosting refugees. Moreover, a durable solution to the refugee crisis entails the resolution of conflicts in the countries of origin, followed by the repatriation of refugees.

Concerning development assistance to Africa, the Ad Hoc Working Group proposes a number of measures in critical areas such as increasing official development assistance (ODA) and flows of foreign direct investment (FDI), and tackling the debt problem. In this context, we should like to reiterate the call on our development partners to increase ODA flows from the current average low level of about 0.25 per cent of gross national product to the agreed target of 0.7 per cent. The provision of ODA should be done in tandem with an increase in investments. Even though many African countries have undertaken structural adjustment programmes and economic reforms, the flow of FDI has been dismal. There is a need for investors to respond positively to the efforts Africa is making to create an enabling environment for foreign direct investment and economic growth.

A solution to the debt burden faced by many African countries has to be found on an urgent basis. Debt repayment drains valuable resources from the rehabilitation and construction of essential development infrastructure and programmes aimed at poverty eradication. We welcome the various debt relief measures taken by the donor community, particularly the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HPIC) Debt Initiative. However, there is a need to relax further the conditionalities attached to HIPC so as to enable more countries to qualify for funding. We further appeal to donors to increase contributions to the HIPC Trust Fund so as to respond to the increased demand for its resources in the HIPC countries. My country, in particular, is grateful to the donor community, since it is one of the few countries that has reached the decision point.

There is a need to address these issues of financial resources in a more comprehensive fashion so that a long-term solution is found for Africa. In this context, we expect that the special concerns of African countries will be taken into account at the high-level international intergovernmental conference on financing for development scheduled for 2001.

For there to be accelerated development in African countries, the international community should direct its support towards the areas of technology transfers and education. The widening technological gap and the deepening digital divide between African countries and developed countries have been major impediments to development. We therefore call on the international community to strengthen efforts to transfer technology to Africa on concessional and grant terms, including information and environmentally sound technologies.

Finally, we endorse the Working Group's proposal that the General Assembly give particular attention to the devastating HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa, and that Member States support and actively participate in the various initiatives under way in this endeavour, including those of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS.

Mr. Mohammad Kamal (Malaysia): First and foremost, my delegation would like to convey its sympathies and condolences to the delegation, Government and people of Singapore on the tragic crash of the Singapore Airlines aircraft yesterday at Taipei. We would also like to convey to all the bereaved families in the other countries affected by the tragic accident that took the lives of their nationals.

My delegation welcomes the opportunity this morning to address this important agenda item 50, the

important item on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. Malaysia is gratified that following the report of the Secretary-General on Africa of April 1998, there has been a tremendous amount of work done by the various organs and bodies of the Organization to address this issue. We particularly welcome the establishment of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa, and congratulate the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, who served as its Chairman. We also congratulate the two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Kishore Mahbubani of Singapore and Ambassador Inocencio Arias of Spain, for their tireless efforts and for putting together the report of the Working Group contained in document A/55/45 following three gruelling sessions during the previous session of the General Assembly.

My delegation commends the comprehensive report of the Ad Hoc Working Group, which contains a wealth of observations and practical proposals. It is clear from the report that while much has been achieved to address the problems besetting Africa, much more still needs to be done in order to overcome the many obstacles to the effective implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General. High on the list of priorities is the need for the international community to muster the political will to continue to assist African countries in their development efforts. Clearly, there needs to be an ongoing and dynamic partnership between the international community and African countries.

Many a time, we have heard the call for good governance in Africa on the argument that responsible governance brings about political stability, which is essential for Africa as it seeks to attract external resources, including foreign direct investment. It is regrettable that Africa has continued to be besieged by numerous armed conflicts, and that perceived risks and instability only serve to push donors and investors away from Africa. We note from the Working Group's report that in spite of some progress on this front, a number of countries in Africa still lack the political will to govern responsibly and to implement accords designed to resolve conflicts. Armed conflicts only serve to harm Africa, and have resulted in more than 8 million Africans becoming refugees and internally displaced persons.

In assisting Africa we should seek ways and means to continue to strengthen the early warning capacity of the Organization to respond to conflict situations on the continent, as well as the capacities of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and subregional organizations. The crucial role of African regional and subregional organizations in the field of preventive diplomacy and the peaceful settlement of disputes cannot be overemphasized. Undoubtedly, the OAU, the Economic Community of West African States, the Southern African Development Community and the Intergovernmental Authority for Development all play important roles in this regard and must be lauded, encouraged and further assisted in their efforts.

However, while we welcome Africa's commitment and its willingness to shoulder increasing responsibility for the resolution of its own conflicts, it is important to ensure that this will not lead to an abdication by the Security Council of its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The pressing concerns regarding this Organization's involvement in Sierra Leone and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, must be appropriately and adequately addressed.

There cannot be peace without development, the two are inextricably linked. With a population of close to 800 million people, Africa, sadly, remains the world's poorest region. The continent's growth rate in 1999 was 3 per cent; it was only 2.1 per cent for the entire decade of the 1990s, well below the estimated 5 per cent gross domestic product growth rate required to prevent the number of poor people from increasing. Economic and social problems are often among the root causes of conflicts, and it remains to be seen whether the international community is up to the challenge to garner the necessary political will to address meaningfully the perennial question of sustaining and enhancing development in Africa. Poverty eradication should continue to be high on the agenda, as poverty only impedes efforts at achieving long-term peace and security. Crippling external debt, limited market access, declining share of foreign direct investment and marginalization from global capital markets owing to a perception of risks and political instability, are just some of the other factors that impede Africa's growth.

Malaysia joins the call for the international community to assist Africa in a more sustained fashion in order to bring about growth, help relieve the millions of poor people from poverty, hunger and diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria, and to encourage the peoples of the affected regions in Africa to fully utilize their potential for a better future.

Clearly, Africa continues to need development assistance. It does not help matters when Africa, already marginalized from international private capital as a result of perceived risks, is further burdened by declining official development assistance. Having fallen about 24 per cent in real terms since the 1990s, official development assistance and other external resource inflows are declining at a time when Africa's needs are most pressing. Only a handful of developed countries have consistently met or exceeded the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product as agreed to at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. That is indeed regrettable, and vigorous and committed efforts must be put in place to reverse this trend.

Malaysia remains convinced that, given the complexity of the issues pertaining to Africa, they must be dealt with in a comprehensive, integrated and coordinated manner if we are to make a significant impact on the situation in Africa. In that regard, we share the view that the General Assembly should continue to be responsible for continuing efforts to monitor the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General in all their aspects, in tandem with efforts made by the other organs of this Organization, as well as other international institutions.

We believe that the progress achieved thus far by Africa must be sustained and further enhanced to reach its full potential. As other regions of the world have done, Africa must learn from the lessons of the past and must move forward to brave the challenges of the new millennium. Of course, in its present stage of development, Africa cannot do it alone. While Africa must play its part in the process, it needs, and must have, the continued assistance, understanding and commitment of the international community. Malaysia will continue to make its modest contribution in that regard.

Mr. Mesdoua (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): I wish at the outset to convey the condolences of the Algerian delegation to the delegations of Angola, the Russian Federation and Singapore on the loss of life resulting from the air disasters that took place yesterday and today.

The General Assembly's consideration of agenda item 50, which relates to follow-up to the report of the Secretary-General (A/52/871) on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, provides an opportunity to thank the President of the General Assembly and his country, Finland, for their interest in Africa, and to pay tribute to his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Namibia, who displayed special commitment to keeping Africa high on the list of priorities during his presidency. Indeed, the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa, whose report (A/55/45) and proposals we are considering today, reflects his dedication and tireless work on behalf of Africa.

The major work carried out by the Working Group is also, and above all, testimony to the high commitment of the two Vice-Chairmen, Kishore Mahbubani of Singapore and Inocencio Arias of Spain, who embody the spirit of the South-South and North-South partnership that Africa so sorely needs. We convey to them our gratitude and our deep appreciation for the work they carried out with great skill and spirit. I wish also to thank the Secretariat for its invaluable support in preparing the report and in facilitating the work of the Working Group.

The Working Group, which the General Assembly established at its fifty-fourth session, has constituted a special approach to following up the implementation of the recommendations the Secretary-General made in his April 1998 report. Indeed, it has been a unique tool for assessment and analysis.

Of course, the relatively brief time at the disposal of the Working Group and the particularly difficult context in which it was working — relating, inter alia, to the very heavy workload of the first half of 2000 — made it impossible to consider all recommendations and proved a constraint on its mandate. But despite such constraints, the Working Group did a remarkable job of fulfilling its mission. It will thus have helped keep Africa at the focal point of

the Organization's attention — which is another virtue of the work it has done.

Furthermore, the innovative formula used by the Working Group as a result of the very rich interaction between Member States and the agencies, institutions and programmes of the United Nations system deserves praise. It might also be beneficial henceforth to apply this formula to the various areas on which we will be focusing in the future and to extend it to the donor community. In this context, we believe that it might be beneficial if, instead of limiting itself to work carried out by the United Nations system for the benefit of Africa, the Working Group also considered information about what the partners are doing.

Paragraph 9 of the Working Group's report shows that discernible progress has been achieved in implementing the Secretary-General's recommendations in a wide range of areas. Nonetheless, as paragraph 12 makes clear, much remains to be done because there are a number of obstacles resulting from political, economic and social considerations at both the national and the international levels.

In fact, the main obstacle continues to be the lack of political will to make the necessary effort to take the actions that are required in support of peace and sustainable development in Africa. It is true that responsibilities are shared, but it is equally true that the international community has unfortunately not yet precisely gauged the challenges in Africa.

Paragraph 228 of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the organization rightly states:

> "Africa continues to face a range of complex and extraordinarily difficult economic, health and security challenges."

Such are the tasks and challenges faced by our continent.

It is true that the situation in Africa continues to be of the highest priority for the United Nations. In this context, the commitment of our partners, in the South, as well as the North, to Africa deserves our appreciation and encouragement. But this commitment should not be absorbed into a plethora of discussions that risk causing the international community to lose its sense of priority and of the need to translate into concrete action commitments on behalf of the continent.

My delegation would like to suggest that the General Assembly and the Working Group pay particular attention to four recommendations whose priority implementation would be a true test of the success of our work.

The first relates to the prevention of conflict and the maintenance of peace. We would like to reiterate the appeal that we have already made, here and elsewhere in other United Nations bodies, for the more consistent involvement of the international community in the global effort to preserve peace and security on the African continent. The universal character of peacekeeping operations requires all members of the international community — the States Members of the United Nations — to show greater solidarity through their consistent participation in United Nations operations in Africa. Recent developments in the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone unfortunately reflect a trend towards the regionalization of such operations in Africa, and this cannot help but have an adverse affect on Africa and, as a consequence, on international peace and security.

African States have shown their willingness to fully assume their responsibilities by taking an important part in keeping the peace on the continent, as evidenced by the most recent discussions between Ethiopia and Eritrea, which took place last week in Algiers. However, it is obvious that the requirements of such a commitment cannot be met by the means and capacities available to African countries.

The second point is the situation of post-conflict countries, for which a very special effort needs to be made, by creating conditions to avoid a resurgence of conflict during the peacekeeping phase. Among other measures, financing programmes for disarmament, demobilization and the reintegration of former combatants from within the peacekeeping budget, as recommended in the Working Group's conclusions, would directly contribute to the success of such programmes. Furthermore, we are pleased to see that this essential measure is one of the recommendations contained in the Brahimi report.

My third point relates to debt relief. With regard to the external debt of African countries, the report of the Working Group stresses the drain on valuable and scarce resources caused by interest payments. This is a question of extreme — indeed, crucial — importance, and its resolution will have a decisive and definitive

impact on any serious effort to stimulate or develop the African economy.

My fourth point — and the fourth proposal in the report — relates to the ravages of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The damage caused by this pandemic in Africa now represents a challenge and a threat to the stability of many countries in the continent. The record numbers, which unfortunately reflect an alarming trend in this area, require the international community to take urgent action commensurate with the scale of the challenge. The next special session of the General Assembly on this question, to be held in June 2001, should contribute to a qualitative and significant evolution in the struggle against this pandemic. Africa, which is the region most seriously affected, places great hope on that event.

The Secretary-General's initiative, as reflected in his report (A/52/871) of April 1998, was both necessary and innovative, given the urgent need for the international community to take action to confront the challenges and needs identified in that report and because of the approach that it recommends with regard to the synergy between peace and security on the one hand and peace and development on the other. It is now up to us to try, together, to identify and develop useful guidelines for future action by the Assembly to follow-up and encourage the implementation of the relevant recommendations of the Secretary-General in order not to disappoint the many expectations of our continent.

For its part, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) has adopted a vision based on the close relationship between peace, security and development. The process of the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa advocates the same approach as the Secretary-General in his 1998 report. We should therefore consider those initiatives as being mutually complementary. Furthermore, it is extremely important for the OAU to be officially invited to contribute to the Working Group by communicating and interacting with it.

One year after the Working Group was created, we must jointly identify and agree on useful future activities on the part of the General Assembly to follow-up the implementation of the relevant recommendations of the Secretary-General. In this context, Algeria believes that the mandate of the Working Group should be renewed under the authority of the President of the General Assembly. Future action for the Working Group, as well as specific topics on which it should focus, could be the subject of consultations and agreement among Member States, facilitated by the President of the General Assembly. We believe that we should also involve the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group in this activity.

The Working Group, as proposed in its report, should establish thematic working groups, coordinated by Member States, to review in greater depth questions that were not analysed sufficiently during the last session.

One important aspect of the follow-up to the implementation of the Secretary-General's recommendations has to do with the evaluation tools that the Working Group will need to examine. It would be useful for one of the thematic subgroups to focus on the definition of parameters and indicators to help it measure the progress achieved. Likewise, the complementarity between the various organs of the Organization, be it the Security Council or the Economic and Social Council, is also of the greatest importance. Greater coordination is needed to improve consistency in this regard.

As the Working Group has requested, it would be desirable for the Assembly to receive periodically all interim reports issued by the Secretary-General on follow-up to the implementation of the recommendations in his report.

Following the adoption of the Millennium Declaration at the unique and historic Summit of world leaders, we express the wish that the specific commitments taken in support of Africa will not simply remain mere declarations of intent, without action.

Finally, I pay special tribute to our partners in Africa, both in the South and the North, and especially to the European Union, whose participation in the Working Group has been continuous, useful and top-notch.

My delegation hopes that future discussions will enable other partners, within and outside the United Nations, to show their interest in and attention to African concerns.

Mr. Chitharanjan (India): We convey our heartfelt condolences and sympathy to Singapore and

to all of the bereaved families affected by the tragic disaster yesterday of Singapore Airlines.

I begin by congratulating the Permanent Representatives of Singapore and Spain, whose dedication and commitment to the work of the most important Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group of the General Assembly led to the successful adoption of its report by consensus. We support the extension of its mandate and look forward to continued active and constructive participation in its work, which we hope will result in concrete action to effectively support the efforts of the African countries themselves directed towards economic growth, prosperity and the well-being of their peoples.

Africa's problems are not unique. They are not problems because they are African. They are problems that have bedevilled countries in similar situations, in Europe and elsewhere, many times before. The solutions to these problems, therefore, have to be the same as were found for Europe after 1945 — namely, aid, development, trade and cooperation. The crucial difference is that, while a devastated Europe received a generous and sustained infusion of capital under the Marshall plan, resurgent Africa has seen prospects for its development and growth denied by a paucity of financial resources. The totality of this challenge needs to be addressed comprehensively, effectively and urgently.

We are satisfied that the Millennium Declaration decided to support the consolidation of democracy in Africa and to assist African countries in their struggle for lasting peace, poverty eradication and sustainable development. The resolve of our leaders, shown in paragraph 27 of the Millennium Declaration, is clear; the international community's approach should be guided by the spirit of learning from Africa, to help itself by helping Africa and not to preach the "perceived wisdom" which seeks to guide development cooperation today. Conditionalities of any sort would only worsen the situation.

We strongly believe that Africa's efforts towards eradicating poverty are predicated on the twin factors of sustained economic growth and external financing. According to the publication *World Economic Situation and Prospects for 2000*, African economies grew by 3 per cent in 1999, recording a marginal increase over the 2.8 per cent economic growth rate of 1998. Notwithstanding this improvement, economic growth over the last decade in Africa has been neither strong enough nor sustained enough to increase per capita income and to achieve a substantial and sustained reduction in poverty levels. It has been estimated that 44 per cent of Africans in the continent as a whole and 51 per cent of the population in sub-Saharan Africa live in absolute poverty. Annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate of between 7 per cent and 8 per cent would be required to halve poverty by 2015. Without growth there cannot be any increase in household or government spending, in private or public capital formation, in health or social welfare.

The question before us, therefore, is how to achieve these growth rates. Another report (A/55/350) submitted to this Millennium Assembly has estimated that an annual investment of 30 per cent to 40 per cent of GDP is required. With a current domestic saving rate of around 18 per cent, it is clear that at least 22 per cent of Africa's GDP should be provided annually by required external resources. In July this year the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), in its report entitled *Capital Flows and Growth in Africa*, said that the only feasible way to end the aid dependence of Africa is to launch a massive aid programme to sustained rapid growth for a sufficiently long period. It estimated that a doubling of aid flow for sub-Saharan Africa of $22 billion a year would amount to no more than an increase of five United States cents to every hundred dollars of consumer spending in Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries — surely not big numbers.

The issue of debt cancellation deserves special consideration. High ratios of external debt to GDP and a high debt service ratio continue to characterize several African countries. Clearly, deteriorating social spending is largely due to rising claims of interest payments on public debt. In many African countries, per capita external debt is twice the yearly income. Africa's debt has increased from $344 billion in 1997 to $359 billion in 1999, debt service as a percentage of export of goods and services has been continuously increasing, from 21.3 per cent in 1997 to 28.7 per cent in 1998 and to 30 per cent last year.

According to almost all measures, despite the high media-visibility debt-relief initiatives, the burden of African countries has been worsening. Many of them have been trapped in a debt cycle whereby new aid is given to service existing debt stock. For sub-

Saharan Africa as a whole, arrears on interest payments on long-term debt accumulated from 1989 to 1998 are over $13 billion, or 14 per cent of the current account deficit. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) estimates that 19,000 children die every day in sub-Saharan Africa because money has to be spent on debt repayments and debt-servicing rather than basic health care. This is clearly unacceptable. Additional resources, apart from official development assistance (ODA), are urgently required to finance fully the envisaged debt cancellation.

We are happy that the international conference on financing for development will focus on issues related to African development. We would like to make only three points.

First, on the issue of domestic mobilization of resources, in these subsistence-level economies, instead of stressing domestic resource mobilization, the international community should concentrate on international actions to meet the 22 per cent financing gap.

Secondly, it is abundantly clear that the overall increase in private capital flows to developing countries has largely bypassed Africa. In 1999, Africa attracted only $8.6 billion in foreign direct investment (FDI) portfolio, of the total $192 billion invested in all the developing countries. This underlines the need for capital exporting countries to eliminate any restrictions, formal or informal, on investments in African countries.

Thirdly, there is the most important issue of the return of capital that has been removed from these countries and squirrelled away. Capital flight remains pervasive; it was estimated to be approximately equal to Africa's external debt stock at the end of 1990s, at around $350 billion. The situation is complicated by the unwillingness of the foreign Governments in whose banks lies the preponderant portion of these massive amounts to make efforts to return this capital to those to whom it rightly belongs — the people of Africa. Africa urgently and desperately needs these funds, not only for development, but also to further its valiant efforts to staunch corruption and ensure that the bribes of a corrupt international economic system do not impair the development of the honest people of Africa. Can we take effective steps to address this issue?

Two years ago, the Secretary-General emphasised the importance of export-led growth for Africa. It is claimed by some that economic growth in 1999 was essentially export-led and that gross domestic product (GDP) growth in 2000 is expected to increase to 4.2 per cent, largely due to an anticipated increase in the value of exports to 11.5 per cent this year. However, African countries are basically primary produce exporters that have suffered sharp deteriorations in the terms of trade. Tariff peaks and tariff escalation, as well as agricultural support policies and restrictive agricultural safeguards of Organization for Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, severely impede the development of export-oriented growth of many African countries. After all, how can a farmer in Africa effectively compete with his Western counterpart when the latter received an average annual subsidy of $25,000 in 1996 and when the OECD countries spend the equivalent of more than Africa's total GDP to subsidize their farmers? In fact, it has been variously estimated that, as a result of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations, Africa stands to lose up to $1.2 billion every year. Effective action must be taken to redress this situation.

I have a few points of detail on the report of the Working Group. We strongly suggest, with regard to paragraph 9 (d), on the impact of refugees, that the role of the United Nations Development Programme in this, and indeed other areas, must be guided by the principles of operational activities, and must not be a strain on its primary role — assisting developing countries in their national development priorities.

Furthermore, we note from paragraph 17 that

> "tied aid has reduced the effectiveness and amount of aid available for use within the recipient countries."

We would, of course, have hoped that the Assembly would go beyond this, to ask for a complete untying of aid as the single most important factor in enhancing the effectiveness of aid. Tied aid makes a mockery of the recent talk of giving recipients a bigger stake in making a success of aid projects — letting them own them, in the jargon, or as a donor was recently heard to say in an African country, "Yes, of course, they must own the projects. We will force them to do it. However, our people back home would be more comfortable if our national was in charge, since vast amounts of taxpayers' money are being spent. If they do not like it, they can get their money elsewhere." This must cease.

Finally, we should eschew the propensity to look at Africa as a homogenous entity with the same problems in all its countries. Obviously, there can be no universal blueprint, and policies have to be tailored by each recipient country to meet its specific structural and economic needs. Our role should be to assist, where we can make a difference, in the actual implementation of the choices made by the African countries themselves.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): Norway welcomes the opportunity once again to discuss the follow-up of the important report (A/52/871) of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, which in April 1998 was submitted to the Security Council and the General Assembly.

Regrettably, there are still several serious conflicts in Africa, and the continent continues to lag behind the rest of the world in economic and social development. According to a United Nations report to the Economic and Social Council session this summer, Africa's economy in 1999 grew by an estimated 3.2 per cent, and during the last decade the continent's annual average growth was only 2.1 per cent, while the yearly population increase was 2.8 per cent. This means that economic growth is not keeping pace with the growth in population and that most African countries are far behind the 7 per cent annual growth rate required to reduce poverty by half by 2015. The slow growth of the African economy is one of the main obstacles to achieving sustainable development and improving the living conditions of the majority of the African people.

Armed conflicts are a major reason for the slow economic growth in a large number of African countries. Here we all have a responsibility, as the Secretary-General pointed out in his report two years ago. There is therefore an urgent need for a stronger commitment both from the African countries and their leaders and from the United Nations and the international community at large. Together we need to take decisive steps to prevent and resolve such conflicts.

Norway believes that speedy and efficient implementation of the recommendations in the report (A/55/305) of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, the so-called Brahimi report, would constitute one such step. We also believe it is important to take further steps to strengthen the mechanisms for cooperation in peacekeeping and peace-building between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), as well as with African subregional organizations.

Norway will continue its efforts to strengthen the United Nations capacity for peacekeeping and conflict prevention, and to support the Trust Fund for Preventive Action. We will also continue our support for the OAU and its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution.

We note with appreciation that important progress has recently been made with regard to resolving some of the ongoing conflicts in Africa. It is, however, important that such progress be followed up with the necessary commitment and political will by the political leaders concerned to implement peace accords and other measures required to ensure that the expectations of peace and reconciliation are attained. Only then may the international community be able to provide the necessary resources to create a basis for sustainable development.

Poverty is both a cause and an effect of conflicts and is endemic to many parts of Africa. Poverty eradication must therefore be one of our main priorities in the work for durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. The ongoing efforts in many countries to develop their own strategies for poverty reduction should be actively supported. In this context, it is also important to ensure proper coordination between the Bretton Woods institutions and the relevant United Nations agencies in order to streamline their activities and create maximum complementarity and synergy.

Furthermore, bilateral donors should ensure that their activities are well coordinated with the work of the multilateral institutions and within an overall framework defined by the recipient countries themselves. It is also important that we stand by our commitments as far as development assistance is concerned. The Norwegian Government is determined to go beyond the current 0.9 per cent of our gross national product devoted to official development assistance to reach 1 per cent. We are also committed to giving priority in our development cooperation to Africa. In order to ensure the best possible international coordination, we shall increase significantly our development assistance allocated through the United Nations agencies. Norway is

already by far the largest per capita contributor to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and we shall further expand our cooperation with UNDP both for poverty reduction and in relation to good governance and post-conflict management. Norway will also continue to give high priority to the ongoing work to alleviate the heavy debt burden of many African countries. We encourage all creditor countries to seek ways to give the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative a new start.

Health is an essential factor for development. It is a tragic fact that more than 23 million Africans today live with HIV/AIDS, and the economies of many African countries are seriously threatened by the epidemic. If unchecked, it is estimated that HIV/AIDS over the next 20 years may reduce the economies of sub-Saharan Africa by a fourth. In some of the hard-hit countries, life expectancy has already been reduced by as much as 20 years. HIV/AIDS now constitutes one of the most serious threats to sustainable development in Africa. The Norwegian Government has therefore decided to double the funding for HIV/AIDS programmes and to give priority to this issue in our cooperation with all our development partners. We also look forward to the upcoming United Nations special session scheduled for next June to take stock and agree on new and strengthened action in this field.

Norway will also increase significantly its contribution to combat tuberculosis and other preventable diseases prevalent in many parts of Africa. We have recently pledged $110 million to the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization in order to save and protect the health of some 25 million poor children who annually fail to receive immunization against easily preventable diseases. We believe this to be a cost-effective tool in the fight against poverty.

Economic growth and sustainable development will not be possible without investments. In order to achieve a gross domestic product growth rate of 7 per cent per annum, it is estimated that sub-Saharan Africa will require an investment rate of 40 per cent compared to the current rate of 17 per cent. This will be possible only through the much more active involvement of the private sector. For this reason, Norway, in cooperation with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, has decided to invite all least developed countries to a conference in Oslo next January to discuss the role of the private sector in our war against poverty.

It should, however, be underlined that investments and economic growth do not occur in a vacuum. Peace and stability are a basic prerequisite for potential investors. There is also a need for transparent and accountable Governments and for the security of personal freedom and private property — in short, for good governance and respect for human rights. This is where many African countries so far have not fulfilled their obligations. The need for good governance is our common challenge — for the African countries themselves and for the international community.

It is therefore important that we all make a renewed, coordinated and sustained effort to promote peace and development on the African continent. Conflict prevention and conflict resolution should go hand in hand with humanitarian aid and development efforts. We must also deal with the root causes of the conflicts and not just the symptoms. Effective crisis management must therefore include promoting long-term and sustainable development, combating poverty and relieving poor countries of their unsustainable debt burden, as well as promoting democratic and economic reforms.

Mr. Valdivieso (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation wishes to participate in the discussion on this item in order to support the work and recommendations submitted to the Assembly by the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa.

We should like to express our gratitude to the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, the Foreign Minister of Namibia, and to the Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, the Ambassadors of Spain and Singapore, for the excellent manner in which they conducted the deliberations, for the open dialogue they promoted and for their skill in guiding our work.

The goal of durable peace in Africa is the profound aspiration of all members of the international community, especially the peoples of Africa themselves, who today are suffering the effects of conflict on a daily basis. We must consider the work of the Working Group as a contribution to this aspiration to peace in Africa because it has allowed us to focus on the causes of conflict, to discuss relief for the populations and to consider how we should all act in order to produce the best possible outcome.

I should like to take this opportunity to highlight some of the initiatives outlined in the report of the Working Group and to link them to recent developments in support of peace and development in Africa.

First are the pan-African initiatives. We welcome with great satisfaction two recent African initiatives that demonstrate the determination of African countries to overcome adverse conditions and to restore peace to the continent. One was the decision to establish the African Economic Community, adopted by the heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity last July as a platform to build a better future and a foundation of unity among its diverse peoples. The other was the plan of action adopted in Abuja in May this year at the African Ministerial Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa. It deserves the broadest possible international support.

Secondly, there are the measures taken within the United Nations system. The United Nations organs have been cooperating with the countries of Africa in various ways that have been highlighted in the presentations made by various agencies to the Working Group. They are also reflected in the document on agreed conclusions issued last year by the Economic and Social Council. We are pleased that the high-level segment of the Council's substantive session next year will be devoted specifically to the development of Africa.

Let me also highlight the decision of the Secretary-General taken in April 2000 to establish a task force between United Nations agencies, headed by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), to respond to the problems of food security and agricultural development in the Horn of Africa where these factors have had a negative bearing on peace and security.

We also believe that the significance given in the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group to measures on behalf of post-conflict countries is very appropriate. Consequently, we support the recommendation that the General Assembly ask the Economic and Social Council to establish a special consultative group to review the economic needs of these countries in order to provide them with support programmes to help them recover successfully. The needs of these countries are very special, and their institutions are still very fragile. Receiving a critical mass of resources on a timely basis could give them the definitive thrust that would make it possible for them to overcome their difficulties.

We also applaud that on 4 September, under the presidency of Mali, the Security Council held a meeting involving the heads of State and Government of its members in order to discuss promoting peace on the African continent. We hope to show our firm support for this idea during our participation on the Council for the next two years starting on 1 January 2001.

Thirdly, there are measures on foreign debt and international trade. The disproportionate weight of external debt continues to be one of the main concerns of the African countries. It is obvious that the highly indebted poor countries should be accorded special attention on the part of their creditors and the international financial institutions in order to attempt to cancel their debt.

Another series of measures would apply to countries that cannot benefit from the current initiatives as a way of relieving their debt. And yet another category of measures would seek to benefit middle-income debtor countries that are interested in avoiding long-term debt sustainability problems.

When it comes to international trade and investments, we are pleased to note the results of the very important Africa-Europe Summit held in Cairo this year, as well as the signing of the Cotonou Agreement last June that will guide commercial cooperation and economic links among the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) States and the European Union.

Fourthly and finally is the matter of the future work of the Ad Hoc Working Group. We believe that the way that this Group has done its work is good, but we believe that improvements would be possible. We would have preferred to have more time to look at some other aspects having to do with causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa — for instance, measures to support countries that have received many refugees or those that have to respond to the urgent needs of internally displaced persons.

We would therefore like to recommend that the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group be extended so that it may continue evaluating the implementation of

the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his report on Africa of 1998. Its work should help the preparations for the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council next year and the final evaluation in 2002 of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s initiative.

Mr. Al-Awdi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): It gives my delegation pleasure to participate in the discussion of the item on the "Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa". We in Kuwait believe that our friends in the African continent deserve our support here at the United Nations, in parallel to our constant support in the field.

My delegation has followed the serious discussions in the United Nations on African issues since 1997 within the Security Council and since 1998 in the General Assembly when this item was included in the agenda of the Assembly. We have been advocating a very clear fact — that this concern and all positive proposals need to be sustainable and implementable in the field so that they can alleviate the suffering of our brethren on the African continent. My delegation believes that chapter VII of the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) on the African continent would be the last theoretical measure that we can adopt here at the United Nations. The only way to confirm the credibility of the United Nations and the keenness of its members to achieve stability in the continent is the adoption of implementable and practical measures that would realize objectives such as the elimination of poverty as well as other social problems in Africa.

Such problems play an important role in fomenting conflicts in Africa. My delegation has actively followed the work of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict in Africa. In this respect, we cannot fail to pay tribute to the laudable efforts of the two Vice-Chairmen of the Group, Ambassador Mahbubani of Singapore and Ambassador Arias of Spain, and their Mission staff in the highly organized and transparent way in which they conducted the work of this Working Group.

My delegation would like to express its full support for most of the items in the report of this Working Group, including the extension of its mandate for the coming session. After reviewing the work of the Working Group and all the reports of the United Nations on the causes of conflict in Africa, we in Kuwait have reached some primary convictions of which we highlight the following:

First, we would like to emphasize the importance of entrusting the follow-up for all the political and development efforts in the African continent to one organ inside the United Nations and to coordinate international efforts inside and outside the United Nations system in order to guarantee best use of the efforts and assistance provided to African States in different fields.

Secondly, the role of the African States is considered a critical and decisive factor in realizing the viable and durable stability in the African continent. In this regard, we welcome the convening of an African ministerial conference on security, stability, development and cooperation in Africa, which would be a way to convince the world that the African continent is seriously working to create favourable and stable circumstances for the development process.

Thirdly, we share the view in the Report of the Working Group stating that the political will for the solution of the African question must be provided by three main parties: the African States, the United Nations and the donor countries.

Fourthly, we would like to emphasize concentrating on the development of the human resources in Africa and to encourage those good Africans, who as we in Kuwait know very well, are capable of rising up to the challenges on the continent.

Fifthly, debt burden relief for African countries is vital in assisting the continent to reinvest any disbursements and assistance in the development domain.

Sixthly, we must steer away from complicated development programmes that are not commensurate with actual reality in Africa. Such plans would require huge financial resources. We must otherwise concentrate on implementing easy plans that aim at eliminating poverty, promoting education and increasing awareness of the concepts of peace and law.

Kuwait has always been keen in its foreign policy on speaking and moving within its actual capacity to assist. Development assistance to friendly countries is considered one of the pillars of Kuwaiti foreign policy, which we implement in good will and within the framework of implementing South-South cooperation.

This was made clear by the 1991 initiative of His Royal Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who wrote off the interest accrued on least developed countries' debts, including African countries, in addition to assistance provided by the Kuwaiti fund for Arab economic development, which provides low-interest loans to African countries.

A cursory look at the report of the Kuwait fund for the year 2000 shows the volume of Kuwaiti development assistance through the fund to countries in East, Central, West and southern Africa until 1999. This assistance by Kuwait amounted to 17 per cent of the total world development assistance to various countries of the world. Six hundred and sixty-two extremely low interest loans were given to African States, totalling in value $1,000,600,000.

We hope that the coming years will not find us talking about African issues as a bad example of the gloomy realities prevailing in our world, or to give credence to the voice of doom preaching the uselessness and inefficiency of the United Nations. We must take it upon ourselves to make our approach to settle African problems a positive example to be emulated in the future. It should underscore the ability of the United Nations and its Member States to face up to the challenges of the new century.

Mr. Shahid (Bangladesh): Bangladesh participates in this debate with a great sense of pride and commitment: pride because of the indomitable spirit of the African people, which has always energized us; commitment because we believe in the cause of peace and development in Africa.

It is from this perspective that Bangladesh wholeheartedly welcomes the report of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa. We note in particular and with appreciation the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report in document A/52/871. We believe that the recommendations of the Secretary-General are to be pursued further, both within Africa and by the international community at large, with a view to eliminating the roots of conflict through a variety of sustained economic and social measures.

Bangladesh welcomes the initiatives taken by the Security Council with regard to Africa and believes that a comprehensive response to Africa's complex and interrelated security and development challenges is needed. We urge the General Assembly and other United Nations bodies, regional organizations, the international financial institutions and Member States to consider the recommendations of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group. We also call upon them to take appropriate actions of their own. We strongly believe that these recommendations can give a new momentum to peace and development in Africa.

We fully share the view expressed by the Secretary-General in his report that the prevention of conflict begins and ends with the promotion of human security and human development. As in other places, conflicts in Africa have their roots in social discrimination, economic deprivation and lack of accountability in the use of political power. At the same time, we believe that the colonial legacy and its continuation in different forms and manifestations are still at work, preventing social and political assimilation and equitable distribution of resources, which foments tensions and conflicts within and among nations. There is little justification for lamenting the human and material loss in the conflicts in Africa and elsewhere when political divisions in every society are feeding today's violence. Prevention is always better than cure. The Secretary-General has already reaffirmed this idea in the context of the African situation. We share this conviction and, therefore, support his suggestion that the international community should encourage the concerned Governments to seek political solutions to conflict situations by working through special mediators and commissioners.

We find useful the suggestions contained in part IV of the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group for addressing the overall mechanism and frameworks to ensure peace, security and development in Africa. The report outlines the areas in which action is to be taken at the national and international level. We believe that no domestic efforts can be successful in the developing countries, in Africa in particular, unless these are matched equally by international support. In this context, my delegation fully supports the recommendation made in the report that calls for cancellation on a once-and-for-all basis, where appropriate, of the debt of the least developed African countries, including those emerging from conflicts. My delegation shares the concern expressed in the report on the inadequacy of contributions to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative Trust

Fund and calls upon the donor countries to the HIPC Trust Fund to make their contributions available. My delegation also calls upon creditor countries to make a firm commitment to take action to write off the HIPC debt in a timely way, consistent with the urgent need for poverty eradication and enhanced economic growth in Africa.

Bangladesh's commitment to the well-being of our brothers and sisters in Africa is rooted in a number of compelling factors. Bangladesh has been a major contributor in almost all United Nations peacekeeping and peacemaking efforts on the African continent. I would also like to mention that, under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh, the participation of Bangladesh in United Nations peacekeeping operations has increased manifold. We have together pursued a similar line of struggle for our independence and still share similar values of life and outlooks on the contemporary global situation. On the economic front, most of the African countries are least developed countries, the group of which Bangladesh has the honour to coordinate. We therefore share common experience and common goals in our struggle to foster a stable social order, economic development and political independence to make life meaningful for our people. Let me reaffirm our commitment to see a conflict-free Africa contributing to global peace, security and development in a meaningful way.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): My first word, on behalf of my delegation, must be one of sympathy and condolence to the Government and people of Singapore at the tragic loss of life in the Singapore Airlines crash yesterday.

Reverting to the item under discussion, I would like, at the outset, to express our appreciation to Ambassador Kishore Mahbubani of Singapore and Ambassador Arias of Spain, the two Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa for effectively presenting the deliberations of the Working Group and providing us with an excellent report.

We would also like to associate ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The challenges faced by Africa are well known. The objectives of achieving peace and prosperity in Africa have been on the priority list of the United Nations and the international community for over a decade. The number of programmes of action adopted on Africa is perhaps higher than the number of such programmes adopted for any other region of the world. Yet, the overall situation of the African continent has not improved over the last two decades. Poverty, disease, famine, lack of human resource development, external debt burden, conflict and strife remain the major obstacles to development in Africa.

These are fundamental challenges but not insurmountable ones. The maladies of underdevelopment are not peculiar to Africa. Many regions of the world have overcome these difficulties and so can Africa. It is encouraging to know that some progress has been made in the implementation of the recommendations made in the report of the Secretary-General (A/52/871), which was released in April 1998. In this context, the launching of the African Ministerial Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa within the framework of the Organization of African Unity is a laudable effort initiated by the countries of the region.

The international community must lend its full support to regional and national efforts for the achievement of the twin goals of peace and development. Africa alone cannot meet these challenges, in fact no region or nation can do so on its own. We need to assist Africa in addressing the root causes of conflicts. This requires a concerted international effort at two levels. In the first instance, there is a need to focus on the underlying political and security aspects of instability in that continent. In parallel, economic and social problems afflicting parts of Africa need to be tackled through a comprehensive assistance programme with adequate resources. But assistance loses its value, both real and moral, if it is motivated by conditionalities or political considerations. Neither peace nor development should be held hostage to ransom.

Pakistan has consistently supported United Nations peacekeeping operations in Africa. We have participated on a large scale in these operations. Our military and civilian personnel have been part of United Nations operations in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Namibia, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Western Sahara. We have a binding commitment to our partnership with Africa. Like in the past, Pakistan will also continue to lend its moral and material support to the development efforts of African countries. Our

Technical Assistance Programme for Africa is an ongoing process of training young professionals in diverse fields. As soon as the South Institute of Information Technology is established, we will be in a position to offer special training facilities in informational technology for students from Africa.

We are all committed to the cause of the development of Africa. Despite this commitment, one of the major obstacles to the effective implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General has been identified as the lack of political will. We have to re-galvanize our efforts and rededicate ourselves to bringing this continent out of the quagmire of poverty and underdevelopment.

Without enhanced official development assistance, increased investment, a durable solution of the external debt burden, market access to products and services from the African region, integration of the African countries into the global economy, efforts for the achievement of the goals of durable peace and sustainable development are not likely to make any impact.

Human resource development remains a major challenge for African countries. Special programmes should be launched for capacity-building, as well as for promoting education and literacy. The international community should strengthen efforts to transfer technology to Africa on concessional and preferential terms.

The Working Group has provided us with a number of important action-oriented recommendations to achieve the twin goals of peace and development in Africa. The international community, particularly the United Nations system, should take all necessary measures to implement the proposals contained in the report.

We believe that the high-level segment of the 2001 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council devoted to the development of Africa could significantly contribute to reinvigorating the United Nations role and assistance for the development efforts of the African countries.

African people have suffered for a long time. Challenges faced by Africa are colossal. We genuinely need to launch global action, not rhetoric, to ensure that the internationally agreed goals for Africa are achieved over a specified time-frame. Words should be turned into deeds. Otherwise, the suffering of Africa will continue unabated.

The international community must launch a concerted effort to promote peace and sustainable development in the continent of Africa. This is our moral obligation and political responsibility. Let us honour this commitment to our African partners.

Mr. Mangueira (Angola): I would like to express our condolences to Singapore on the tragic crash of the Singapore Airlines aircraft. I would also like to thank all our friends and colleagues who have conveyed their condolences to us today on the tragic crash in Angola in which 48 people died.

On behalf of the Angolan delegation, I would like to congratulate Ambassador Kishore Mahbubani on his presentation of the report of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa. Angola was one of the countries that actively participated in the last session of the Working Group, and therefore could not but participate in today's debate on this important issue.

In our opinion, the main goal of the Working Group is to seek modalities for further action to prevent conflicts in Africa in order to promote peace, security and economic growth in that part of the world. Our delegation therefore finds the present report to be an acceptable document that reflects the compromise reached by States during the last session and contains useful proposals towards reaching the goals I have just mentioned.

One of the tasks before the international community is to follow up the recommendations and decisions taken on different issues. The report notes that many recommendations have been made by the international community in such fields as peacekeeping, finance, debt, social development, AIDS and human capacity. Unfortunately, the results of those recommendations and decisions do not cover all the issues that African States expected would be addressed. This is due, among other things, to the absence of an effective mechanism to implement and coordinate actions.

In our view, one of the most important tasks of the Working Group is to draw more attention to the question of how to strengthen at all levels the mechanism to implement decisions in order to avoid a

gap between decisions and actions taken. We understand well the moral character of the recommendations, but we cannot let their political force be lost because of relationships between countries. The situation in Africa would have changed for the better if there had been active participation by weapon-producing countries and the Bretton Woods institutions in the meetings of the Working Group, and if Member States had shown greater willingness to implement and respect the decisions taken collectively by the international community.

In that regard, allow me to give one concrete example. The Security Council has adopted resolutions to put an end to the Angolan conflict, namely, resolutions 864 (1993), 1127 (1997), 1173 (1998) and, more recently, resolution 1295 (2000). Had those resolutions been fully implemented by some concerned States and supervised more effectively, life could have been made better for all Angolans throughout the country. We can find similar situations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone and other countries in Africa. It is not only important to adopt good resolutions, but also to reinforce the implementation mechanism for those decisions — including through the use of sanctions — in order to be more effective not only in peacekeeping and peace-building processes, but also in other fields.

Of course, a country like Angola, which spends more than half of its gross domestic product on war and security matters, meets with serious difficulties in sustaining its economy and developing programmes to face its grave humanitarian situation and eradicate poverty. This means that there is a direct linkage between peace, security and sustainable development.

The development of Africa covers all areas of social life, including politics, economics, social welfare, education, peace and stability. Among other things, African States need financial resources to reach that development. The report of the Working Group notes that the total resources allocated to development assistance for African countries has been decreasing since the early 1990s. It is necessary to find a way to reverse that trend so that African countries can benefit more from foreign debt investment destined for public health, developing economic structures, building human resource capacity, education, poverty eradication, and so on.

In our view, the report does not sufficiently address the role of such regional and subregional African organizations as the Organization of African Unity, the African Economic Community, the Southern African Development Community, the Economic Community of West African States and the Economic Community of Central African States in the development process and in eliminating the causes of conflicts in Africa. I think these organizations play an important role in this matter, especially in the areas of peace, settling disputes among Member States and creating conditions for strengthening regional cooperation with a view to a single African economic market. It is therefore necessary that the Working Group emphasize the participation of all African organizations, each at its own level and within its own region.

We are convinced that internal efforts have to be made by African Governments to allow for the participation of civil society in State affairs through its elected representatives, democratic political regimes, the private sector, investments, non-governmental organizations, trade unions and other organizations. Those efforts should also seek to create a culture of transparency, accountability and peace. The rational combination of domestic and international efforts is one of the keys to finding a successful way of promoting durable peace and sustainable development.

Finally, I would like to express my hope that there be more participation by all concerned parties at the next session of the Working Group in order that the recommendations that have been adopted will translate into actions and not be mere words.

Mr. Absi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the delegation of the United Arab Emirates, I commend United Nations efforts to address the problems of the African continent. I thank the Secretary-General for his report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871).

Africa continues to face obstacles that hamper its development process. These include local and regional armed conflicts, growing indebtedness, rampant poverty, scarcity of financial resources, and the spread of dangerous diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria. The situation is exacerbated by Africa's inability to reap the benefits of peaceful technologies; this has had

a negative effect on Africa's inclusion in economic progress, especially at the international level.

Despite the key role that the United Nations has played in Africa in the past, we consider that much remains to be done. There must be a concerted regional and international effort to promote African resources and capabilities so that the continent can take its proper place in the world economic and political arena. To attain that goal, and if we are to arrive at a new system that would help in resolving conflicts peacefully and through negotiations, and in accordance with the principles of the Charter and international law, there must be political will at the local level, accompanied by broader political will at the regional and international levels. This must be accompanied by strengthened cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). In that context, we stress how important it is to consider the recommendations of the report (A/55/305) of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations chaired by Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi if we are to put an end to the destructive conflicts that beset the African continent and to set up a rapid reaction force to contain such conflicts in ways consistent with the specific characteristics of each conflict.

We are convinced that developed countries and international and regional development institutions have a role to play in providing both official and unofficial assistance, in the form of loans and grants, to African countries with a view to eliminating their external debt, especially the debt of the least developed ones, helping their economies and improving the level of investment. This requires that the developed world's markets be opened to products from developing countries.

His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, the head of State of the United Arab Emirates, is convinced that there can be a bright future for Africa and for all mankind. In the light of the historical and cultural links between the United Arab Emirates and Africa, our State has worked to engage in economic, social and cultural cooperation with many African countries. The United Arab Emirates participates in numerous programmes providing support and humanitarian and development assistance, both through official channels including the United Nations Development Programme and regional funds, and through public-sector projects and public-sector organizations such as Red Crescent societies.

The delegation of the United Arab Emirates hopes that, with the assistance of the international community, African countries will succeed in overcoming the difficult obstacles and challenges that beset them so that they can take their proper place in the international arena and meet their peoples' aspirations for peace, security, stability and development.

Mr. Mmualefe (Botswana): The report of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa, contained in document A/55/45, provides the General Assembly with proposals on how to move forward in a concrete manner on recommendations made by the Secretary-General on this very important issue.

In our view, the Working Group must be commended for discharging the initial phase of its task of monitoring the implementation both of the Secretary-General's proposals and of those which emerged from the 1999 coordination segment of the Economic and Social Council. At this juncture, my delegation wishes to commend the Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, the representatives of Singapore and of Spain, for their leadership and their commitment to the process.

It is clear that the problems of underdevelopment and poverty afflicting many African countries are linked to both domestic and international factors and require holistic treatment if real and sustainable solutions are to be found. Despite unremitting efforts by African countries to lift themselves out of difficulties and crises, only partial success has been achieved. This, however, is no surprise, because the underlying factors that influence growth, development and peace have not yet been adequately addressed. Poverty is one such factor which causes a loss of human potential and which leads to the destabilization of societies. There is, therefore, a pressing necessity for coordinated, cross-sectoral efforts to eradicate poverty.

The Working Group wisely limited its focus to three additional areas: debt relief, HIV/AIDS and support to countries in post-conflict situations. There is no doubt that these are very important issues in the context of African development. In fact, many intergovernmental conferences, notably the World Summit for Social Development, have identified these

issues as critical and urgent. Unfortunately, implementation still lags behind.

It is now widely recognized that the full engagement of civil society organizations and the private sector is vital if the goals set out in the report, as well as those elaborated under the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa, are to be realized.

The task before this Organization will be a long-drawn-out and arduous one. African countries are willing to meet their end of the bargain, as was made clear at the recent Organization of African Unity (OAU) Summit, as well as the Africa-Europe Summit, during which African Governments committed themselves to promoting an environment conducive to development. What is required now are consolidated efforts by us all to support the development of Africa. These efforts should build upon initiatives already undertaken by African countries for conflict resolution. In this regard, we wish to highlight the important role played by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), supported by the OAU, in dealing with conflict situations in their subregions.

The United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions and our bilateral donors should aim at coordinated approaches which will have an impact on communities across the African continent. It is evident that close monitoring and clear target-setting have to be undertaken if we are to continue to benefit from an objective assessment of progress on the ground. That is why we strongly believe that the Working Group should continue with its mandate of monitoring progress. In our opinion, the continuation of the Working Group would allow the General Assembly to examine other areas outside the mandate of the Working Group and also make room for the inclusion of emerging issues.

In conclusion, the delegation of Botswana appreciates the renewed focus on Africa by the United Nations. The Millennium Summit pronounced itself strongly on African issues, and we hope that this pronouncement will also find expression in the outcome of the forthcoming high-level international intergovernmental event on financing for development.

Mr. Cappagli (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like first to express the gratitude of the delegation of Argentina to the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa, Foreign Minister Gurirab of Namibia, and the two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Mahbubani of Singapore and Ambassador Arias of Spain, for their hard work during the three sessions of the Working Group this year and for the complete and well-balanced report submitted for the Assembly's consideration.

We agree with the fundamental premise of the report regarding the relationship between peace and development. In order to achieve lasting peace in Africa, minimum conditions for development must be created. The majority of African Governments are making enormous efforts to resolve ongoing disputes in a peaceful manner, strengthen their democratic institutions, promote human rights and reform their economies. Those tasks, which are being carried out by Africans themselves, require the support of the international community.

With regard to armed conflict, we believe it essential to adopt an integrated strategy that incorporates elements of conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict peace-building. Close and constant cooperation and a substantive exchange of information between the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the African subregional organizations will be indispensable at every stage. Clearly, the OAU has a relevant role to play in resolving African conflicts, and we believe that Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter is an important instrument in this respect. However, this in no way exempts the Security Council from its main responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. On the contrary, following the cold war, it will require new sensitivity on the part of the Security Council if it is to understand the nature and the deep-rooted causes of African conflict. Only more direct knowledge of the realities in the countries affected and of the political, social, economic and humanitarian circumstances surrounding conflict, can result in such sensitivity.

In this context, we believe that the Security Council missions this year to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Sierra Leone were a step in the right direction. Furthermore, greater transparency in the work of the Security Council, closer contact with the General Assembly and the

establishment of a frank dialogue with the parties to conflict and with troop-contributing countries are also required. In this respect, the initiative to hold substantive meetings with troop-contributing countries, such as took place in October with regard to the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, must be maintained and strengthened. In Africa, as in other parts of the world, the success of a peacekeeping operation will depend on the existence of political will, expressed in concrete terms through the contribution of adequate financial and human resources.

An examination of the relationship between the illegal exploitation of natural resources and the continuation of armed conflict is a further element in helping us to understand armed conflict. In that respect, the establishment of the independent panels of experts for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and for Sierra Leone will enable progress to be made.

Finally, the tribunals for Rwanda and for Sierra Leone will be an important deterrent and an indispensable component of a stable, lasting and just peace. We believe that there will be no true reconciliation and peace-building if those responsible for crimes that offend the common conscience of humanity go unpunished.

We live in a world of contradictions: integration and globalization coexist with fragmentation and marginalization. Reality shows us that the economic prosperity achieved in recent years coexists with the most extreme poverty in certain parts of Africa and elsewhere in the world. One fifth of humankind has to survive on just $1 per day. In spite of this, official development assistance (ODA) has been constantly declining. We believe that it must be increased. We also believe that the relationship between ODA and the implementation of policies is the key to ensuring sustained economic growth in Africa. Combating inflation and the fiscal deficit and encouraging savings and investment are measures that are directly related to the effectiveness of ODA.

Support should not be confined to ODA. It must also take the form of trade liberalization that will allow for greater international integration of African countries in the global market. Tariff barriers are taking new forms, such as the setting of work standards, environmental standards and anti-dumping measures, sending a discouraging signal to those African countries that are making considerable efforts to modernize their economies and acquire new export markets.

Today we wish to renew once again Argentina's commitment to Africa. From the beginning, our country has participated in and encouraged the decolonization process on the continent. Today we are promoting the state of law and the opening of the economy in the region. We have increased our trade and strengthened political relations. Consistent with the belief that peace and development are linked, Argentina has made contributions to peacekeeping operations in Africa, provided humanitarian assistance directly or through the "White Helmets" and promoted cooperation for development through cooperation funds. Furthermore, in the framework of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic, which connects three Latin American countries with 21 African countries, and which Argentina has been coordinating since 1998, we have proposed a series of initiatives aimed at deepening cooperation among its members.

We wish to conclude by reiterating the role played by African countries through the OAU and through subregional organizations in seeking solutions to their problems. The international community cannot, nor should it, remain indifferent to that effort. The United Nations, because of its universal character, and because of its broad mandate in the political, economic and social areas, has the capacity and the legitimacy to contribute effectively to peace and development in Africa. We believe that the special Working Group has carried out, and must continue to carry out, an important task of analysis, coordination and operational follow-up of the different initiatives for Africa existing within the United Nations system.

The meeting rose at 1.55 p.m.